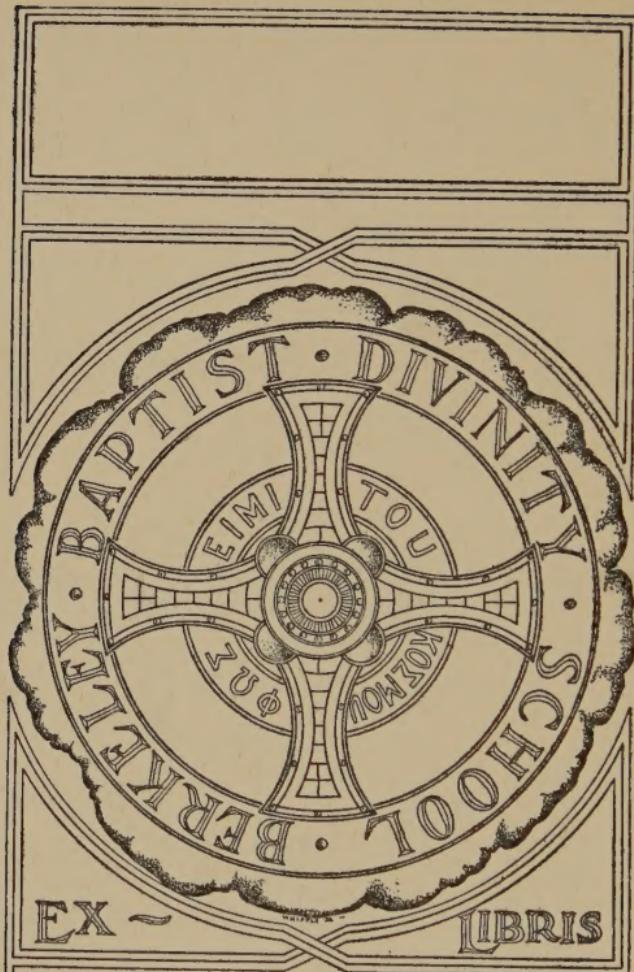


THE MANDARIN

BY J. A. DAY-S





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THE KITE-FLYING FESTIVAL.

THE YOUNG MANDARIN

A Story of Chinese Life

BY THE

REV. J. A. DAVIS

Author of "The Chinese Slave Girl," "Tom Bard," "Choh Lin, the Chinese Boy who became a Preacher," "Leng Tso, the Bible Woman," "The Flaw in the Iron," "Rescue the Drunkard," "Upton," etc.



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To the Memory of
A Great Man, a Worthy Missionary,
the Author's
Loved and Helpful Friend,
REV. J. V. N. TALMAGE, D.D.,
for more than forty years a Missionary in China,
This Book is Affectionately Dedicated.

PREFACE.

THE following story, though not all fact, is not fiction. Its incidents are either real occurrences or like them.

The official corruption presented may be less in other localities; yet it is to be feared that it is general and great.

The customs described may differ in other parts of China; the author has presented what he knew prevailed in the vicinity of Amoy, his home for a time.

The facts regarding the famine were gathered from published reports of missionaries and from statements made by missionaries to the author. At least one of those stated that sixty-three per cent. of government appropriations were taken for their own use by mandarins, instead of being applied for the relief of suffering.

The Tai Ping Rebellion is, of course, a matter of history; but the facts relating to the capture of Amoy were obtained from him whose name appears on the page of dedication. And to him the author is indebted for many other facts and incidents of the story.

The purpose of the writer is apparent; he wishes to add to the general knowledge regarding one of the most remarkable nations of history.

China is coming to the front, and growing in power as she is in importance. She cannot remain in the background, nor can nations force her to the rear. An unseen power is bringing the whole world out of darkness and toward the Centre of civilization. In the great problems to be solved the Middle Kingdom will prove an important factor.

It may be that in the near future her present government will disappear with the Tartar rulers. But the Chinese are not disappearing either from their own land or any other

where they find an abiding place. Drive them out by force and some day they will come back with power greater than that driving them away. They have long memories, are persistent haters, as they have warm hearts and do not forget favors. Four hundred millions of them exist; and Christianity must consider the people of the Middle Kingdom. It must consider them other than savage or even half civilized. They are a mighty people just beginning to awake to realize what powers are latent within them. That mass of human beings, each one with elements of a persistent foe or faithful friend, each one capable of becoming a noble or villain, each one of the hundred million able to bear arms will, if well disciplined and armed under commanders in whom they confide and with a cause worth fighting for, prove himself a soldier who can die as well as do.

There is only one reasonable, honorable, safe way of treating the Chinese. Give them the gospel in practice as well as in theory and there will be no Chinese problem for solution.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE YOUNG MANDARIN.

CHAPTER I.

A LITTLE STRANGER.

A YOUNG Chinaman, many years ago, left his home in the country to seek his fortune in Amoy. Finding no other business, he hired out to an owner of vessels, and became a boatman. Active, faithful, cheerful, and obliging, he made many friends, some among foreign captains. These advised him to buy a boat and begin business for himself.

Two years after coming to the port, Tun Lin, or Lin Tun, as the Chinese called him, owned a boat and was making money. Shrewd, alert, he never allowed a chance to earn a cash to pass without improving it. Early and late, in sunshine and storm, in his boat, he gained much business that others might have missed. Before he had been his own master twenty months he was counted among the prosperous boatmen of Amoy. Then he bought another boat and hired a man to manage it for him, and so added to his dollars.

“ Tun Hia, now that you are making money, why

not get a wife?" asked a comrade, as the boatmen were waiting one day at the jetty for passengers.

Hia is Chinese for "brother," and is used as we use the term.

"Wives cost too much, or I might have bought one long ago," was the reply.

"They are cheap now. A good woman can be had for a hundred dollars," said another.

"That is a large sum to pay. At my home they were often bought for half of that. If they had not been as cheap, half the women would have remained unmarried," spoke Tun, or Mr. Lin, as he may be known.

"Fifty dollars! I would like to know what kind of women can be had for that price. I would get a wife myself if I could get a good one for fifty dollars," chimed in another boatman.

"Where would you ever get fifty dollars? As soon as you have one, you gamble it away," said a comrade.

"If I had a wife and children I might save money for them," responded the gambler. "A man must have some pleasure."

"Tun Hia, I know of a first-class woman whom you can get for less than a hundred dollars if you try at once. Her father and brothers failed to marry her to the man of their choice, and now cannot find good

men to take her; yet she is a number one good woman. I know that to be true."

"Where is the woman?" asked two or three at once.

"If Tun Hia wants to know I can tell him at the proper time," was the answer, "but I do not mean to tell every one."

When it was known that the prosperous young boatman wished a wife, professional matchmakers visited him and commended scores of most desirable women for his choice. Of course he was not allowed to see any, nor even told who they were until he seemed ready to begin bargaining for a wife. As he showed interest in the matter, the matchmakers continued to come with new bargains, better than any before offered. Gradually the boatman learned what kind of wives were in the market, and then his own preferences, and he was ready to talk business. After the choice was made came the question of price; and on that was many a hopeful bargain wrecked.

At last the price of the boatman and matchmaker approached agreement. Each haggled over the dollar that separated them until the bargain seemed destined to take its place with many others. In vain the boatman urged that such a woman could be found everywhere; in vain the other that the world never had but one, and she was now offered the boatman for the last time.

The agreement, after several months of bargaining,

was reached and first payment made ; so Mr. Lin was engaged to be married. Nor could he withdraw without disgrace, and, what meant even more to him, paying a large sum as forfeit. Yet he had never seen his betrothed, nor even her picture. Like his fellows, he was content to wait to see his bride until the day of the wedding ; nor did he lie awake at night thinking about her. True philosopher that he was, he reasoned that he would know her looks soon enough. Then, if beautiful, he would be all the more delighted ; if homely, he would at all events remain in ignorance of the fact until his wedding day.

That long-set day arrived, and Amoy harbor had one idle boat and absent boatman. Though he did not go to the home of the bride, he remained at his own newly rented and furnished home that day, waiting for the wedding party. His own parental home was too far away, business too urgent, for him to lose time in travel. He meant to begin housekeeping at once, so the bride might as well come to her future home for the wedding. Of course it would be contrary to Chinese custom for the marriage to take place in the home of the bride.

In due time the wedding took place, the young couple started housekeeping, and the boatman returned to his business a married man, and commanding more respect from his comrades. They did not serenade

nor ridicule, but congratulated him on his entering married life, and hopelessly sighed over their own bachelorhood.

Before he lived in China, the writer asked, what many readers may wish to know, "How can it be that many female infants in China are put to death, and yet leave enough to provide every man with one, some with two and more wives?" The answer is, while an unmarried woman beyond twenty is seldom found, beyond twenty-five hardly ever, there is a multitude of bachelors in China. Many cannot afford to support a wife and family, more cannot afford to purchase a wife. Even if they could there are not enough to go round.

While Chinese deny that women are bought for wives, it is merely a matter of terms. They say the woman's parents or relatives have been at great expense in rearing the future wife, and that the money paid is merely to repay what has been spent on the woman. They even refuse to use terms of remuneration, saying that it is merely a dowry. This is not the place to discuss the subject; the facts have been stated, the reader may apply terms as appear suitable.

A year went by and the couple were childless. Two passed and no son nor even daughter gladdened the home. The third ended and yet the two were alone.

Young Mrs. Lin was not a devout idolater, but she visited temples more and more as these years came and went, and prayed the gods, especially "Mother," the goddess of children, for a son. Said a friend to her:—

"Your husband is a boatman, why not pray to Matsaw-po, the goddess of sailors? She is obliged to hear your prayers."

"I have done so often," was the reply; "but in vain."

"Have you prayed to her attendants, Favorable-wind-ear and Thousand-li-eye? They have great influence over her. One, you know, can hear wind coming at a great distance; the other can see it a thousand li (half as many miles) away."

"I will ask their help, too, yet fear my prayers are doomed to disappointment. Fortunately my husband's mother is coming to live with us, because his father is dead now. As she is very devout and visits the temple daily, her supplications may be heard."

The boatman's mother came and made her home with her eldest son, and at once became mistress of the house. Though her privilege and duty to live with her eldest son, if her home was broken up, the older Mrs. Lin felt another inducement to make her son's home her own. Though she had brought him up a faithful worshiper of the gods, Amoy society and a

boatman's life had made him forget gods, temples, everything pertaining to religion, except the ceremonies of the New Year. Said the mother soon after moving to Amoy:—

“There is reason for gods refusing to hear your wife's prayer for a son. You have turned from the gods yourself. They have forgotten you. Until you worship them again you need not expect favors from them.”

“My worthy mother forgets,” said Mr. Lin, “that while my wife worships I earn the money to pay for the offerings. Why should I lose time and money too at the temples, when my wife can pray for both of us?”

“You wish prosperity. Do you suppose the gods will give if you never visit their houses nor ask their help?”

“I am prosperous already.”

“Simply because the gods remember your former faithfulness. When they forget or have paid fully for that, then will come adversity, trial, loss, perhaps ruin and death.”

“Some of the most prosperous men in Amoy never visit a temple from the beginning to the end of the year.”

“How many more are poor, wretched, miserable, and worthless! Never, my son, neglect the gods if you wish their help or prosperity.”

Two years after the mother came to her son's house, Mr. Lin was proud to hear himself called father. A son had come to bless his home.

Shortly after the proud father had greeted his child he heard a voice, as he was hurrying along the street to business, calling:—

“*Ka li kiong-hi!*” (Unto you congratulations.)

“Why congratulate me?” asked Mr. Lin, turning and bowing to his friend San Tuk, who stood with clasped hands and face wreathed in smiles, bowing humbly to the boatman.

“I have just learned of the arrival at your home of a young prince.”

“Your worthy self is exhausting your strength by honoring me thus, and I thank you ten thousand times.”

“The arrival is a prince then?”

“Yes; the little dog has come to my hovel.”

“Ten thousand congratulations. I was sure it would be a prince that would honor your palace. May he live ten thousand years and add luster to his worthy father's noble name. If he imitates his noble parent, he will shed a flood of sunlight on this earth.”

“You honor greatly your most unworthy slave by showing me such attention. What am I, and the little cur in my hut, that we should receive such good wishes from one so noble as he is who addresses me?”

After more compliments, and many a mutual bow and clasp of their own hands, the two, while facing each other, moved backward, and finally each went on his way. And this is Chinese politeness.

Had the child been a girl, Mr. San would have dropped his hands by his side, hung his head, muttered a few condolences in an undertone, and escaped as quickly as possible from his friend. The birth of a girl does not call for joy, but sorrow. It means useless cost without due return. It means that, though the home is not childless now, in the future when children are needed to care for parents in old age, and for their spirits after death, there will be no child to do it.

Because girls must marry and leave their homes when they reach womanhood, and after that belong to another family, because they cannot care for the spirits of their ancestors, but must care for those of the husband's family, girls are not wanted. Their birth is counted a calamity. Nor are those the only reasons. Girls cannot work as boys do ; they cannot add to the scanty earnings of the father ; instead, they add to the expense of the family. Still another reason is present in the mind of many a mother. By sad experience she knows that woman is a slave, hardly reckoned human, and doomed to a life of degradation and confinement ; therefore the mother looks on her infant daughter as entering on a life of un-

known but certain sorrow and trial, and her mother's heart forgets her own joy in the smile of the little one, as she thinks of the daughter's later sorrow.

With the birth of his child came a change in the life of the boatman as regards gods and temples. He said that the child must have all the good it could get from every god and temple in Amoy; and no offering must be spared that promised a return to the little one. He added that every ceremony for children must be observed and no custom omitted.

Old Mrs. Lin was delighted. She believed her son was coming back to idolatry, and her own devotion to the gods was greater than ever. She called to mind, and refreshed her memory by consulting other grandmothers on every custom and ceremony for children known in that part of China.

Shortly after the birth of the child a red cord was tied about each wrist, and a few days later another bearing Chinese cash—a large copper coin—was fastened around his neck. The red color would give good luck, the cords on the wrists would keep hands out of mischief and make the child obedient, while the cord about his neck would keep evil spirits away, and the cash would prevent his having the colic.

When the little one was two weeks old his grandmother carried him to the temple of "Mother," and with many thanks and offerings of gratitude prayed

the goddess to take care of, keep from illness, and make very prosperous the child whom she had given in answer to prayer. The last petition was that, above all, the child might become rich. It was the one universal prayer for children.

China has many gods, and it is often asked which is supposed to be the mightiest. Were the question, Which controls the hearts of the people? the answer would be, The Almighty Dollar. Except his ancestral tablets, the Chinaman will sell everything for money, if the price be sufficient. Wife, children, even his own life are not too precious, if the dollars in return for the sacrifice be very many. Nor does *many* mean millions or even thousands. A few hundred to him make a fortune. With interest from ten to twenty, and even more, per cent., — and living costs very little, — a few hundreds will support a family. Fifty dollars a year is a fair, even above the average, income of the laboring man.

When his child was a month old, Mr. Lin invited relatives and friends to his house to a feast in honor of the young son. Each guest was expected to bring a present for parents or child; and each expected another fully as good in return. Among the guests was Mrs. Wong, the boatman's mother-in-law. Because a grandmother, she brought clothing, sweet cakes, duck eggs on which were painted pictures of

flowers, animals, and children, and other tokens of love.

When the guests had come Mrs. Lin took her child, followed by the whole company, to the room in which were kept the ancestral tablets, and seated herself before a table on which were lighted candles and incense sticks. After the company became quiet, old Mrs. Lin begged the spirits in the tablets to notice and accept the ceremony to be performed in their presence. Then a barber among the guests stepped forward, and with a small but sharp razor shaved every particle of hair from the head of the child. During this operation the people looked on and praised most warmly the child, his courage, his beauty, his prospects, and not least, though in lower tones, his parents.

The Chinese say it prevents baldness to shave a child's head in infancy. Though the practice of shaving the head of every man disguises baldness, it is doubtful if there be men with bald crowns—the portion unshaven—in that empire.

Shaving the head and wearing the queue are a Tartar, not Chinese custom. Before the Tartars conquered the country the people wore their hair long and fastened in a tuft at the top. After the Mantchu Tartars, in 1644, came into power, they hinted that the conquered people should adopt the queue. The hint

was taken by many ; more declined, and the hint was made stronger. Not until the people learned that they had little chance for justice if they did not wear the queue did they accept, then unwillingly, the new custom. Now the men seem proud of this abomination. But it is as well that they extract pride from necessity, for hair worn by men in the old Chinese style is regarded as a declaration of rebellion. So he who follows the old custom soon has no head on which to wear a queue.

After his son's head had been shaved the boatman asked the barber what reward should be given for such acceptable services. The man of the razor replied that he could not for a moment think of accepting pay for such an honor as had been conferred on him. In after years he would look with pride on this day and service, for doubtless it would be said that he "had shaved for the first time the head of that great man."

Flattery pleases in all lands, even though it seldom deceives. Mr. Lin might not believe all the barber said, but he rewarded him well, nevertheless, for his good wishes.

The next ceremony was *giving a name*. Though he would keep this only until he began school days, and must change again when he married, the first would be the most important name of his life, and the most

dangerous for the child. To give a grand one would mean to evil spirits, demons, and foes that the child was beloved, and that great expectations rested in him. So, to trouble others, they need but afflict the little one.

While girls, who are of little importance, may be left nameless, or simply *numbered*, or receive such names as *Ti* (pig), *Miau* (cat), *Kow* (dog), *Him* (bear), *Sai* (lion), or better such as star, mountain, river, boys are named with far greater care. Their names, however, may be almost anything from the meanest animal up to the noblest virtue known. But the boy must get his name when a month old ; the girl, whenever it pleases friends to bestow one. If she be forgotten, her companions give a nickname that soon becomes her permanent property.

While a noble name may be dangerous for a boy, to dispute about it even is counted unsafe. The dispute will attract the attention of evil ones, and mark the child for future troubles.

Though guests share in choosing and giving a name, the Lins deemed it wise to decide on one before the feast. “*Tee Siek*” was chosen, and every guest declared that it was the best possible name for the child. If the first syllable be spoken in a rising tone, the name means of *little account*, if in a falling tone, the meaning is *wisdom*. They would speak to mean

the first while they thought of him as the second ; thus would please themselves and deceive evil ones.

After giving the name came the feast. This was the grand occasion for Mr. Lin's poor relatives and friends ; and they made the most of it. Soups, fish, meats, vegetables in great variety had a place there, and not least were wines and *samshu*, or rice whiskey. Though each drank, none became intoxicated. Drunkenness is not a Chinese vice. Of course tea was provided in abundance, and each drank more of that than of stronger fluids. Water did not appear. Chinese think that very good for watering plants and cattle, but unfit for quenching human thirst.

At the close of the feast came the parting with guests, and a test of power in offering and receiving compliments. Parents and child must have the most and best praises that the guests could pour upon them. Nor could the Lins suffer themselves to be outdone. Slowly disappeared the company ; and then came the time for selecting presents to send after them. For good wish and word of flattery a return of gratitude in gifts was sent, and all remembered the Lins as hospitable, liberal hosts. If each child was honored with such a feast, then the friends hoped the Lins would have ten thousand children.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY DAYS.

THE Lins invited their friends and relatives to another feast when Tee Siek was four months old. Each guest brought, as usual, a present for parents or child, and old Mrs. Wong offerings for "Mother" and sweets for her grandson. Beside those she had a bright red chair and a huge piece of molasses candy.

After the friends had arrived the grandmothers led the way to the room in which were kept idols and ancestral tablets; and, while the spectators were finding good places to stand, the two old ladies were preparing for the ceremonies. Speedily came silence, and then the grandmothers made offerings to the gods, and presented thanksgivings and prayer in behalf of Tee Siek. When the idols had received due attention, Mr. Lin's turn came. He placed food and drink before the ancestral tablets, and then bowed in prayer to the spirits of the dead. He thanked them for caring for his son, praised their goodness, and told how much they were missed on earth; then asked their favor in the future for his child, and prayed them to make him great and very rich.

Some readers may not know what an ancestral tablet is; therefore others will pardon the author for giving a description here.

While many are plain, some are elaborately carved; yet the general appearance of ancestral tablets is the same. They are made of three pieces of wood: a base, about an inch in height, two in width, and four in length, and two uprights. These latter fit closely together, are mortised in the base, and appear like one piece; but the front one is only about two thirds the height of the other, and unites with it under a projecting top. The two together are about an inch thick, two wide, and from twelve to twenty high.

On the front upright are carved or painted the names of the deceased, and of the emperor reigning at the time of death; and lower, on the left hand in small characters, the name of the son who had the tablet made. On the back of the front piece or front of the back one, and hidden from view, are recorded the cause of death and other facts regarding the one whose spirit is to dwell in the wood.

The new tablet is carried in a sedan chair to the grave in an honored place in the funeral procession, and, after the burial, one of the spirits supposed to inhabit the body is persuaded to enter the wood, which is then marked with vermillion and forever after regarded as sacred. The tablet is carried back to the

home of the eldest son of the deceased, and there given food, drink, and worship as if it were a god. For at least three generations it must be carefully kept and worshiped, then may be burned, but its ashes must be sacredly buried.

Several stories are told by the Chinese to explain the origin of the ancestral tablet. One is the following :—

A boy, who saw the hard struggle of his parents to support him and themselves, determined that they should not work at all after he became a man, if able to provide for them. Before he reached manhood his parents died. Since he could keep his resolution in no other way, he made wooden images of his father and mother and worshiped them as gods, and gave them food and drink. When the young man married, his wife ridiculed his devotion to the images, and showed her contempt for them by pricking each with a needle. To her astonishment, blood flowed from the wounds. She tried to keep her act from her husband, but, on his return home at night, he saw tears in the eyes of both images, and then discovered what his wife had done. He was so indignant that he promptly got a divorce from her.

In Southern China the people believe that each body has three spirits (in Northern China the number seems to be greater), and at death one goes into the spirit

world, another remains with the body at the grave, and the third enters the tablet. The first is worshiped for a month in spring, the second during another month in summer, and the third all the year round. Probably none can tell which spirit enters a body the second time and is born anew, nor what becomes of the spirit that resided in it after the tablet is burned. The superstitions regarding the spirits of the dead are as various as they are vague.

The religious ceremonies ended, Mrs. Wong set the red chair in the middle of the room, while old Mrs. Lin warmed and spread the molasses candy on the seat. Then the child's mother handed him to his paternal grandmother, who sat him in the chair, and, pressing him gently until he was seated firmly on the candy, left him to sit alone for the first time in his life. Again praises and admiration for the child and compliments for the parents were in order.

While the company stood admiring, a bowl of chicken broth was brought and the little fellow fed by a grandmother. Bits of meat were given also, and then, after having sat alone and eaten animal and solid food, little Tee Siek was removed from the chair and allowed to go to sleep, while the guests enjoyed the feast prepared for them.

When a year old the child was honored with a birthday party. Again friends and relatives, and

more than on former occasions, came, each bearing a present to celebrate the day. Mrs. Wong's offering, as usual, was the most important and best. This time she brought, among other things, a cap and pair of slippers.

Such feasts always begin with religious ceremonies if mothers have anything to do with them, and Mrs. Lin the elder was mistress; so nothing relating to gods or ancestors was omitted. After worship came the great event of the child's life.

Tee Siek was a year old, and the time had come for him to choose, at least to indicate, his profession or business. What though he were too young to know? He was merely an instrument directed by some hidden power; and friends wished to know what that power had chosen as the business of the child.

A sieve, used for cleaning rice, had been set on a table in front of the ancestral tablets, and on it scattered the various implements and tools representing the occupations of men in China. A small space was left near the middle, and on that Tee Siek was placed and left alone.

This was a serious, an anxious, a critical time; and every guest was silent, while parents and grandparents looked on in almost breathless anxiety. Next to parents and grandparents, the older members of the company stood nearest to the child; while children

climbed chairs and benches to watch in serious silence the movements of the little one. Though the younger Mrs. Lin stood with eyes fixed on her child, intently studying his face and every movement of his hands, the father was still more intent. He hardly moved a muscle or even winked an eye. His soul seemed absorbed in his son, and forgetful of everything but the choice that was to declare the future of his boy. Old Mrs. Lin was a study. She stood as if cut in stone. If it had not been for her eyes moving, and now and again an involuntary movement of her hand, as if she were guiding the fingers of the child, it might have easily been supposed that she was a statue carved by a master's hand.

For a few moments Tee Siek was silent and still after he had been seated. Then his eyes turned from one object to another, until he saw an artificial flower. Its bright color attracted his attention; about the same time he noticed the button of a mandarin, worn on the hat to indicate rank. Both little hands went out, one to the flower, the other to the button. The flower went to the mouth, but was dropped before reaching the lips. The hard button followed, after its hardness was revealed in the child's attempt to bite it. Both hands sought other charms, the right grasping a book and the left a blacksmith's hammer. The hammer was lifted to pound the button, and the book pulled until

its leaves began to tear. This was the signal for his removal; and old Mrs. Lin hastily lifted him from the sieve and sat Tee Siek on a chair.

The silence had, however, been broken before, and all present were chattering now like magpies. Mrs. Lin, senior, had broken silence, when she saw her grandson's hand seize the button. Said she with deep excitement:—

“ See! see! he takes the mandarin's button! He will be a mandarin!”

“ See! see! he has the flowers! He will love the beautiful, and be a poet!” spoke the other grandmother.

“ He will become mighty and yet gentle, and love the beautiful,” said the mother, heaving a sigh of relief, and relaxing her anxious face into a smile of satisfaction.

“ He will eat mandarins,” declared a boy, looking over his father's shoulder from a chair.

“ He will break the power of an evil government,” suggested an old man.

“ He will become a scholar at last,” added old Mrs. Lin triumphantly. “ Then he will lead his countrymen back to the gods of their fathers. It is well, and as I prayed.”

Mr. Lin remained silent; nor did he at first respond to the congratulations of his guests. Had the child taken

hold of an oar or seized the merchant's scales for weighing silver, the father would have been delighted. At last he replied to a congratulation :—

“ Yes ; if he becomes a scholar, he may earn money too. But I would rather have had him follow my business.”

A feast followed this ceremony, and then came another ceremony of less importance. Tee Siek was a year old, and the time had come to walk. Chickens walk as soon as they leave the shell ; so Chinese suppose their legs contain special strength that can be transferred to him who eats those legs ; for this reason children slow to walk are fed on chicken-feet broth.

A dish of this broth was brought and fed to the child, to prepare him to make his first attempt at walking. Then he was fitted out in cap and slippers. He must wear those now or never be able to own any ; if he started to walk bareheaded and barefooted, he might be compelled to do so forever.

Again guests gathered around as the two grandmothers took charge of the child. Old Mrs. Lin set him on his feet on the floor, holding his hands lest he fall, and Mrs. Wong seized a broad-bladed knife and prepared for work. While one grandmother led the little fellow along and encouraged him to walk, the other kept close behind and pretended to cut invisible threads supposed to tangle the feet. For a few steps

the child staggered along, led by his grandmother Lin, and then the walking ceremony ended, and the child's duties for the day were over.

Before he was two years old, Tee Siek grew thin, weak, and seemed wasting with a hidden disease. Remedies used by his mother and grandmother had no effect, and his parents became alarmed. Old Mrs. Lin persuaded her son to send for a Tauist priest rather than a doctor, because, as she declared, the gods were angry and punished the child for the father's neglect of temple worship.

Though Chinese usually call doctors in time of sickness, the more devout idolaters frequently summon Tauist priests. If doctors fail to cure, then the patrons turn to the priests too; in the same way the devout ones turn to doctors if priests fail. The fact is, that there is little to choose between the two classes; and the probabilities are that whichever is chosen, the sufferer will wish he had been placed under the other's care.

Money at times makes a difference. The doctor states his price; the priest leaves that to the liberality of the patrons. It is a common thing for friends of the sufferer to bargain with the doctor, and offer him a certain sum to cure the patient. If he, after a long dicker, refuses to accept the terms offered, another is sought. The purpose is to get the most medicine,

and cure of course, for the least amount of money. If a doctor fail to effect a cure within a fixed limit, he may be discharged and another called in. There is little professional pride or honor among Chinese physicians; nor is this strange, for many of them are doctors because that pays best. Many who fail in other lines of business, be it what it may, become physicians. Perhaps they reason that every man has his *forte*; and since theirs proved to be nothing else, it must, therefore, be in the medical profession. Theirs is rather a *profession* than *possession*, for not a few Chinese doctors have no more knowledge of medicines than their patients.

Instead of one, four priests came. The leader explained that he would need help, and that his companions were anxious to do what they could to assist in the recovery of a member of such a devout family. The men came before breakfast, but did not work before eating, though they examined the child, and discussed the disease and its best remedy.

Work began after breakfast, not, however, for the child, but the goddesses expected. Paintings of "Mother" and other goddesses were hung on the wall; a table, on which were ten dishes with meats and fruit, was placed in the center of the room, and in front of the paintings were set four tables, one on the top of the other, the smallest near the ceiling. On

this last the leader set in order, as his companions handed them, small images, lighted incense sticks, and burning candles.

Next the priests asked for such things as ladies use in preparing for company, and placed in another room wash bowl, pitcher, hot water, towels, artificial flowers, paint, and other toilet articles, and then left the room for the deities supposed to be waiting to prepare for the feast.

Then they made a light door frame of bamboo, so braced that it could be set anywhere without falling over. This completed, they supposed the goddesses ready for dinner, so summoned them to the feast. The leader prayed, his first assistant rang a bell, the second clanged his cymbals, and the third beat a drum. Prayer and clang, ringing and beating, continued for several minutes, until the goddesses were surely at dinner; then the priests prepared to enjoy another meal themselves. So leisurely had been their work, so many consultations seemed necessary, that the dinner hour had arrived when they were ready to eat.

The men were in no hurry to begin real work after dinner. They excused their tardiness by saying that it would not do to hurry the deities in the other room, lest they be offended and decline to assist. Late in the afternoon, however, they were ready, and said that

the deities were too, so time for the important service of the day came. This was called the ceremony of Passing Through the Door.

The leader, dressed as "Mother," but handling a sword, took a position near the door frame, standing in the middle of the room, and behind him came Mr. Lin with the child in his arms; right behind, as near to her son as possible, stood old Mrs. Lin, and directly back of her the mother of the sufferer. The other priests, one with a bell, another with cymbals, and the third with his drum, stood near the frame, but out of reach of the swordsman.

When all were ready the leader began to shout, meanwhile to cut with his sword, up, down, right, left, backward, and in front, as he called to all demons, evil spirits, and bad influences to get out of the way or be cut in pieces. His voice was the signal for bell, cymbals, and drum, and the clang and clatter were enough to frighten human beings if not demons. For a few minutes the priests continued; then the leader changed his tone and language. He now besought, as earnestly as before he had commanded, but his prayer was to the goddesses, gods, good spirits, and all friendly powers, to protect the family behind him, and especially to favor the little sufferer.

As he began this prayer, the leader began the procession through the door frame, closely followed by

the Lins. A short silence came after the family had gone beyond the frame. That was quickly moved to a corner of the room, and again with sword thrusts, shouts of warning, and threats of most horrible sufferings if they came in his reach, the leader called to every evil power to get out of the way. Again his companions began their noise, and again with changed voice and threats transformed to prayers, the priest led the Lins for the second time through the door frame.

Once more there was silence, then a removal to another corner, and again the family followed the leader through it, after he had warned foes and besought friends. Thus each corner in turn was visited; then the frame was set for the second time in the middle of the room, and the first procession repeated. Hardly had Mrs. Lin gone through before each priest dropped his instrument and sprang to the frame with hammer and hatchet, beating and cutting it into hundreds of pieces. These were hastily gathered and every portion burned; and then the ceremony ended.

Its object was to confuse and bewilder the evil spirits troubling the child, and to get him beyond their reach and into the power of the goddesses. Then by passing through the door again and again the evil ones would be the more perplexed to find the child. After the door frame was destroyed they could not possibly discover his place.

"You need have no further fear for your child," said the leading priest to Mr. Lin. "He will speedily recover. Should he ever be in danger hereafter, the goddesses whom you have so hospitably entertained will see that he is protected."

"And what reward may I give for your most acceptable services?" asked the boatman.

"Do you suppose we would have darkened your door had we thought of pay or reward of any kind? It is enough to know that we have served faithful friends of the gods. We will not, cannot, accept the slightest token of gratitude even. We serve the gods, and you have shown again and again your gratitude to them, so we ask nothing more."

Notwithstanding the at first angry protest of all the priests, and their later refusal to accept any reward, Mr. Lin insisted that he could not allow them to leave without some slight token of gratitude. Though the men declared that they would carry nothing whatever along, they concluded that it would be most ungrateful if they refused everything, and ended by taking all Mr. Lin gave.

Shrewd man! he knew that if he did not give liberally they would tell everybody they met that he was a mean, stingy miser, who got all he could and gave nothing in return. Now they extolled his liberality to the skies.

Instead of recovering, Tee Siek grew worse. Doctors were summoned and changed, but no change for the better in the child. Mother and grandmother visited temple after temple, praying and offering to the gods without success.

Like wise women, they did not neglect remedies of their own, and before death came they found a remedy that was successful. Tee Siek began to improve. Before his third birthday he was well again.

CHAPTER III.

THE TAI PING REBELLION.

NEAR the date of Tee Siek's birth a noted rebellion began about one hundred miles southwest of the city of Canton. Its leader, Hung Siu Tsun, was an educated man and a graduate. He learned about Christianity through an American missionary, and applied for baptism. Though this request was denied, he persisted in declaring himself a Christian, and made the New Testament his religious guide. Soon he became a teacher of Christianity, and proclaimed it by preaching and writing in prose and poetry. Earnestly, eloquently, he pleaded with his countrymen to turn from idols and superstition to the true God. He was very bitter against idolatry and idols, and said that images should not even be allowed to exist; thus he prepared the way for their destruction. The new teacher seemed sincere, and foreigners believed him a true Christian; for his life was according to his doctrine.

Before the new doctrines attracted attention Hung Siu Tsun had no less than three thousand disciples; and multitudes more were interested in him and his teaching. Most of these gave up idols, but not an-

cestral tablets, and accepted Jesus Christ as their God, and the New Testament as the book of their religion.

By and by the new worship and doctrines began to attract the attention of the rich, learned, and official classes. Though they cared little for religion, they saw hidden in this new faith rebellion and an overthrow of the imperial government. Rather than make war on Hung Siu Tsun, these leaders aroused the common people against the new faith.

The lower classes, believing that temples, gods, tablets, ancestral worship, everything pertaining to religion, would be destroyed if speedy and severe measures were not employed, began at once to oppose Hung Siu Tsun and his followers. They forbade him to preach, and commanded his followers to cease their worship, threatening, if their commands were disobeyed, to punish severely the disobedient. They waited hardly long enough to see what the result of their threats would be. Taking for granted that the new religion must be rooted out by force, they commenced their work of persecution and punishment.

The new teacher taught that his disciples should submit to persecution rather than fight; but when they were assailed and likely to be killed, he bade them defend themselves. This they were only too ready and willing to do. They resisted the foe and

fought bravely. The result of the first fight was a complete victory for the disciples of the reformer.

Stinging under the shame and disgrace of defeat, the enemy massed larger numbers and renewed the attack. They sought to take the disciples unawares, but in vain. While the attacking party fought against those believed to be foes of faith and fatherland, the other fought for religion, liberty, and life. The struggle was severe, but resulted in a complete victory for Hung Siu Tsun.

Other battles followed and with like results. The assailants were driven back each time with heavy loss, and the disciples of the reformer proved the better warriors.

Seeing that he must fight if he would preach, Hun Siu Tsun settled it as a part of his faith that he must become a soldier. Though he did not cease to preach and write the new doctrines, he gathered and disciplined soldiers to battle for them. Nor did he purpose remaining on the defensive.

After a number of defeats the foes of the reformer became wary and kept away from his camp. They became suspicious that some hidden yet mighty power was helping him, and that their efforts to overthrow the new religion would result in their own destruction.

The followers of the teacher now, elated by success, demanded that they be led against their foes. The

leader hesitated. He knew that meant rebellion, and death to every rebel, should the efforts prove unsuccessful. And success meant nothing less than the overthrow of the Tartar government and establishment of a new empire.

Yielding to the demands of his followers, to the extent that he was willing to attack those who had shown most hostility to his disciples, the teacher led against several towns and invariably captured them. The fear of the conquering force often did as much as Hung Siu Tsun's soldiers; and villages yielded after a slight resistance, some without a battle.

The commander of the victorious disciples gained a thirst for conquest. His forces were increasing, his power growing, his reputation spreading, and he yielded to the passion. Perhaps he was unconscious of the inspiration, for he professed to be moved by an entirely different purpose. That was to march through the land with his victorious disciples, proclaim the new doctrine, and then overthrow the imperial government, and in its stead set up another kingdom. This he made known as his grand purpose. He proclaimed his new government as the *Tai Ping Kok*, or Great Peace Kingdom, and set out for the north.

Instead of coming by hundreds, recruits flocked to the Tai Ping army, as it was called, by thousands.

These were composed of all kinds of people, good, bad, worse, and worst. Many seekers after the truth came to hear and accepted the new faith. More who were eager to overthrow the Tartar power flocked to his standard. They cared little for a change of religion, everything for a change of rulers. Still others, the number far from small, who sought a change, no matter what, crowded round the leader. Besides all these, there came bands of robbers, professional thieves, outlaws, cutthroats, vagabonds, and villains of every description, to enlist under the new standard. One band of robbers commanded by a woman joined the camp and proved themselves furious soldiers under their feminine leader.

It is hardly necessary to say that these latter had no interest in religion of any kind, nor had they much patience with their leader's preaching. What they wanted was fighting and spoils, fighting and vengeance, fighting and slaughter.

His forces increased far beyond his power to organize and discipline them; and as for convincing them that his were the true doctrines and Jesus the true God, that was simply impossible. Yet the determined commander ceased not his preaching nor his prayers. Daily religious services were held on that northern march and soldiers expected to attend.

Though this army refused to give up ancestral wor-

ship, it did accept Jesus nominally as its God, and rejected idolatry. It even destroyed idols and temples wherever found. In after years the march of a Tai Ping army could be traced by ruined temples in its track.

The march northward, while not a triumph, was nevertheless a succession of victories. The imperial government, aroused to a sense of danger, made desperate efforts to stop the progress of the conquering hosts, and to destroy the Tai Ping army. Though hosts were sent against it, each in turn was defeated, driven away, or annihilated.

The Tartar rule seemed near its end, the Tai Ping everywhere triumphant. The masses swarming to the conquering army indicated that the country was accepting the rebellion and eager for its success. That was a dark period in the history of the imperial power when the rebels reached and took possession of Nankin and made it their capital.

But an unexpected foe appeared. The Tai Pings, mostly from a warmer climate, were unable to resist successfully and fight well during the cold and frost of a northern winter. Another foe was secretly destroying the character of the rebel hosts. The robbers and murderers were making the forces over after their pattern.

New foes appeared in the imperial army in the form of foreign officers and European discipline. These

changed victory from Tai Pings to Imperialists. They forced rebels to fight for retention, not conquest, and the war became a losing one for the hitherto triumphant hosts.

Driven from Nankin, the rebel forces were divided and compelled to separate and fly, pursued by mandarin armies officered in part by foreigners. Though desperate fighting continued, victory seldom favored the Tai Pings. Defeats disheartened them, pursuit scattered them, and finally the rebels, except in small groups still seeking to win villages, not daring to attack large towns, disappeared. These last either were killed or became robber bands again.

When the war ended large portions of the country were ruined and desolate. Villages had disappeared and even cities lay in ruins. The city of Chong Chew, west of Amoy, containing, it was said, one million inhabitants before the rebellion, had less than two hundred thousand after. It had been a war of destruction and desolation. The Tai Pings showed little mercy to cities resisting; the mandarins, none. The Tai Pings fought, and after they obtained victory, acted like savages; the mandarins, like demons. Were the story of that rebellion written, men would say it is fiction. It is well that it remains unwritten. Such horrid cruelties are better buried outside the page of history.

During the victorious careers of the Tai Pings, smaller armies, professing to belong to them, attacked cities away from the great body, and thus subjected much territory never really under Hung Siu Tsun's sway. One of these bodies prepared to attack Amoy. This city of two hundred thousand people, built on the inner side of an island of the same name, has a citadel protecting a small portion, while the remainder is guarded only by outer walls of the outside houses, with gates shut across the streets in time of danger. Though the walls of brick, stone, concrete, might resist an army with ordinary weapons, they are powerless against cannon and battering ram.

Amoy was an important naval station then, yet few vessels were in the harbor and a small number of soldiers in the citadel. There was such a demand for fleets and forces that the government was compelled to neglect every place not in danger of immediate assault.

The tide began to ebb about noon of the day when the attack was expected in Amoy harbor, and shortly after a vessel came swiftly around the island of Kolongsu, half a mile west of the city, and landed near the mandarin office. Two officials hastened ashore, and the boat put off for the fleet at the north end of the harbor. The boatmen shouted, as they passed other vessels, that the Tai Pings were coming.

Shortly after cries from Kolongsu proclaimed that the rebels were in sight. Nor was it much later when the expected fleet rounded Kolongsu at the south and came to anchor close to the city, and less than two miles below the government junks.

The excited crowds wondered that no battle followed; nor could they understand why mandarin vessels lay quietly at anchor, though the tide was favorable for an attack. All through the remainder of the day they looked with anxious expectation for the beginning of the dreaded conflict, and not until darkness set in were they certain that the fight would be delayed until the morrow.

Like many others, Mr. Lin was more curious than eager to escape, so remained with his boats in the harbor. But thoughts of home overcame his curiosity, and he ordered his men to take the vessels over to Kolongsu for safety, while he started long before night for home. To his amazement the street gates were locked, nor would coaxing or bribe induce the watchers to open them. Shut out of the city, he returned to the water and found his boats waiting on the Amoy side.

When night came the vessels were taken across the harbor, and Mr. Lin and his men, as he had often before, made themselves comfortable in the little boats for the night. With a cushion for a bed and

mat for covering, he asked for no other bodily comfort; yet he slept little. His thoughts were of home and treasures there. He did not forget his child, his mother, nor yet his wife; but a pile of silver dollars stored away in a strong box had much of his anxiety.

Foreseeing trouble, he had not invested his gains during the past years, nor had he loaned the money, lest borrowers be driven away or killed. He preferred to lose interest to risking the capital. He had chosen the least of two evils, but realized that it was likely to be the greater now. If the rebels captured the city, robbers might, during the change of rulers and confusion following, ply their business to his cost.

A change of rulers, a riot, a disturbance of any kind, bring a harvest to thieves in China. The wonder is that they do not force such calamities upon the people by combination. Probably few nations as civilized as the Middle Kingdom have more professional or ready-to-be robbers. That they do not cause riot declares that the people are peaceful.

CHAPTER IV.

VICTORY.

WHEN Mr. Lin awoke at daybreak, after a troubled sleep, he moved his boats cautiously across to the Amoy side, intending to enter the city and hurry home as soon as the gates were open. Near the landing he saw a sight that surprised and alarmed him.

On the shore stood a large body of armed men waiting for the gates to open. The boatman needed no one to tell that the Tai Pings had landed and meant to enter the city. He dared not land there. Thinking that the rebels were only waiting along the water front on the south and west sides of the city, Mr. Lin pushed farther up the harbor; but before each gate stood a company of soldiers. He reached the north side and found at last a place where there were no rebels. But the gates were closed, nor would entreaty or money open them. In vain he tried gate after gate; at last he turned back until he came to where the rebels had been. The streets were open and the rebel army had disappeared.

Passing into a street and hurrying homeward, Mr. Lin learned that the rebels had taken complete posses-

sion of the city. So quick and quiet had been their movements that half of the inhabitants did not know that the rebels were on shore, much less that Amoy was in their power.

Mr. Lin saw rebel soldiers keeping guard, and everything peaceful, so felt more easy, though he did not slacken his speed. Reaching his house he saw that the doors were shut; and when he tried he found them locked and barred, showing that his family was within and safe. Not until he had knocked and shouted to them to open and let him in was he admitted.

Old Mrs. Lin welcomed her son noisily, while his wife showed her gratitude that he was safe and well by her quiet smile.

“I knew that the gods would protect him from rebels,” said the old lady, “for I have prayed them to care for him in times of danger. The gods are good even to those who neglect them.”

“Yet they do not keep the rebels out of the city,” responded Mr. Lin.

“True, but they have prevented a battle and have saved many lives,” answered old Mrs. Lin.

“We have not seen the end. This is but the beginning. The mandarins may show to-day what they can do. We must not think that they will give up the city without fighting. The citadel remains in the power of the government soldiers. Until the rebels take that

and drive the imperial fleet out of the harbor we must not expect peace or safety," said Mr. Lin.

"The gods will care for and protect us, whether mandarins or rebels rule. I have not served them so long in vain," spoke the old lady.

The capture of the city was a great surprise to the citizens and mandarins; while the landing of the rebels was a mystery. Who had brought them ashore? Who had opened the gates to let them in? These questions, asked often, answered oftener, probably were answered correctly when it was said that friendly boatmen brought the Tai Pings ashore after midnight, and others who sympathized with the rebellion within the city opened the gates. It was well known that many throughout the country, and many in Amoy, favored the Tai Pings, yet hesitated to show sympathy until the rebellion became an assured success.

Though the outer city was in the possession of Tai Pings, the citadel remained closed against them. Until that was captured their victory and conquest of Amoy were uncertain.

Immediately after stationing guards through the streets, the rebels, in three divisions, hurried to three of the four gates of the walled portion of the town. The north gate was ignored. Until they reached the gates, the soldiers were silent; but a sudden and great change took place as soon as their march ceased. The

soldiers seemed transformed into shouting demons. Armed with hammers, clubs, timbers, battering rams, indeed everything serving the purpose, they assaulted the gates and shouted, screamed, yelled meanwhile as though noise was as necessary as force. Blows rained against the strong gates, and yells seemed the chorus. For a long time the gates resisted, then one showed signs of yielding ; immediately it seemed as though a cyclone of demons had struck that gate, and they were imitating the noise of pandemonium there. When an opening was made the horrid yells continued, and if possible were increased, with intervals of silence. But not a soldier passed within the walls.

Not until the great increase in shouts, screams, and yells from the other gates told that those had given way too, did a Tai Ping attempt to leave the outer for the inner city. When a small pandemonium seemed in full force at each gate, the Tai Pings rushed wildly through, and, yelling as they went, ran along the streets of the citadel toward the northern gate. A few moments sufficed to leave the gates without a soldier, the openings as silent as though death reigned. But the yells continued, only were heard farther and farther from the three, nearer and nearer the fourth gate.

When they entered the citadel, the rebels saw not a soldier nor yet citizen. The streets were deserted,

nor was there a sound heard except the yells of the Tai Pings. As they approached the unassaulted gate, they beheld the last of the government soldiers hurrying through on the way to the water. Slackening their speed, the rebels did not cease their noise, nor did they stop the pursuit. Not until the Tai Pings were near the shore, and the last soldier was approaching the junks at anchor, did the pursuit and noise end.

At length the soldiers had all tumbled on board the waiting junks ; and then began a hurried departure of the fleet. Anchors were weighed, sails hoisted, and swiftly the vessels sailed down the harbor and passed out to sea.

Meanwhile the Tai Pings returned, took possession of citadel and city, and Amoy came quietly under rebel rule.

The mandarins, unprepared for battle, deemed it wise to escape without a defeat, that they might return later with sufficient force to recapture and hold the city. The rebels had taken it by shrewdness, but power would drive them out later.

This method of attack is thoroughly Chinese, and has been explained thus by one of that nation : " If you corner a rat, he will turn and bite ; if you give him a chance to escape unharmed, he will run away and leave you in possession."

Though they had captured, the rebels knew that they

could not hold Amoy long without a battle. Until forced to fight, they meant to enjoy peace, so treated the citizens kindly, and in turn were respected and obeyed as rulers.

Rumors soon reached Amoy that a mandarin fleet was preparing in the north to capture the city; the people were excited, the rebels aroused to activity. They tried in vain to increase their army. Though citizens obeyed the Tai Ping authority, they were too uncertain about results to do more except to sell at good prices all the weapons needed.

One morning the city was startled with the news of the arrival of the mandarin fleet. By climbing the hills men could see a number of junks anchored at the south end of the island; and it was said that they were sending ashore a vast army to attack Amoy on the land side.

About the same time another discovery was made. Except a few sentinels, the Tai Pings had left the citadel. Nor were they on board the vessels; for no more than were needed to care for those appeared on deck.

“I know where the Tai Pings are,” said a man, hurrying almost breathless into the city from the south. “Sentinels are waiting to receive the government army, and a fight will follow.”

The people were terrified and well-nigh paralyzed.

They dared not escape lest rebel sentinels be guarding the city on all sides ; nor did they think seriously of trying. Chinese-like, they believed that efforts to get away would be useless ; if fated to die they must perish, no matter whether within or outside the city.

The government troops hastened ashore, and with little order or regularity hurried forward to attack Amoy before the rebels could prepare to defend it. Disorder became confusion long before half the distance had been made. This confusion was increased by a band of Tai Pings drawn up across the line of march.

With a shout the leaders rushed forward to capture the daring rebels. When but a few tens of yards away the advancing host was startled by a volley of musketry from the little band. Several were wounded, two killed. For a moment the advance of the army stopped, more because of surprise than fear. Those behind pressed on those in front, and after the dead and wounded were removed, the whole force moved forward to attack the brave company.

Instead of running, the rebels coolly loaded their guns and then retreated slowly and regularly. Reaching a good position, they waited for the pursuers to come nearer than before. Again a volley sent to the ground several of the mandarin soldiers.

Before the dead and wounded could be removed, the

men in the rear pushed those in front forward, as they sought to capture the daring fellows who had killed their comrades. Some stumbled over the wounded and dying, and were in turn trampled to death.

A third discharge of muskets rendered helpless several more of the advancing army. Their comrades, enraged that so small a company dared to oppose and even fire at them, and furious that several had been killed and more wounded, rushed madly after the retreating rebels. Nor did they notice that the fugitives took another than the direct route to the city. Each soldier, determining to avenge the death of comrades, forgot caution, forgot reason, forgot everything but the escaping foe.

The rebels, fresh and vigorous, soon left their pursuers behind, and then halted to load their muskets. Again they fired into the face of the foe, and the dead and dying fell, while over their bodies others stumbled and were trampled to death.

The confusion made the pursuers unmanageable; the check to the men in the front added to the fearful disorder, and soldiers listened neither to commanders nor to comrades. Their movement seemed a wild stampede, needing only fright to make it terribly fatal.

The rebels had planned shrewdly, the government troops had carried out that plan perfectly, and now

came the result. While the audacious company in front turned again to fire, on either side of the mass of men arose, as if from the ground, a long line of Tai Ping soldiers.

The government troops were entrapped. Before officers could restore order or compel a halt, their soldiers were fired on by these lines of Tai Pings, and hundreds fell. The dreadful surprise, the yells of the rebels, the death of their comrades, sent despair to the disordered multitude. They could not prepare to resist, they could not flee ; they could but die, as wild beasts entrapped and shot down by the hunters. Only a few on either side could use weapons. These speedily lay dead or dying, and gave place to comrades behind them to fight and fall.

This slaughter could not last. Had the surprised soldiers been cattle, they might have sunk down in despair, as bullet and arrow, spear and sling-stone, did their work. These were men, they were soldiers ; and, though undisciplined, they were not without courage. They loved life and determined to fight for it, though death come a moment sooner in the battle. Beyond the rebel ranks was safety. To reach it bowmen threw aside bows and arrows and, grasping knives and daggers, rushed upon the foe. Spearmen leveled their weapons and charged ; musketeers clubbed their guns and sprang forward for death or liberty.

The slaughter became a battle now, and the battle a multitude of duels. Sword clashed against sword ; dagger struck dagger ; spear broke on spear ; musket clanged against musket in the deadly struggle. When a weapon failed, a dead hand yielded another to the living and the fight went on. Yells ceased, shouts grew less. Desperation does its work in silence. Rebels and government troops mingled in the strife. The flash of steel was seen everywhere, the musket shot ceased ; the fight was too close, too confused, for powder and ball. He who conquered in one duel must fight another ; and the hero of several at last fell a victim to a fresh foe. Often such fights ended only when Tai Ping and Imperial soldier lay side by side in a pool of their mingled blood.

The rebel ranks were broken, but by the death of those who had kept them, not by cowardice. Rebels fell where they stood, and sometimes across the bodies of the men their hands had slain, and no one took the vacant places. Through these openings passed many bleeding soldiers, followed by others who, using the bodies of comrades as shields, had escaped unharmed. When a mandarin soldier broke through the rebel ranks he thought no further of comrades nor of duty. His one purpose was to escape as far and as quickly as possible from the terrible foe. But all who passed the lines did not escape.

Fugitives were pursued and again duels were fought, with results like those on the larger field of battle. Some found a refuge among the hills, others gained safety in the city, and still others returned to the vessels and were taken on board.

At last the fight was over, except when a Tai Ping discovered a mandarin soldier hiding, then a battle with only two to fight it resulted; and some of these fights had no victor; they ended with two lying dead or dying on the field.

The defeat of the government forces had been as terrible as it had been complete. Though many found their way back to the fleet, far more never returned. Most of these had been killed, some who gained safety never cared to risk their lives in another fight with the rebels, so did not go back to the army. When the fugitives had reached the fleet, anchors were weighed and sails hoisted, then the vessels moved away toward the north.

For six months the Tai Pings held possession of Amoy; then another and even larger mandarin fleet entered the harbor, sailed around west of Kolongsu, and came to rest in the government anchorage. Hardly were sails down before soldiers began to go ashore. An army speedily landed and encamped north of the city. When the last soldiers had reached the land the fleet weighed anchor and, under full sail,

bore down upon the rebel vessels. Approaching them each junk poured a broadside into the helpless Tai Pings and sailed on around Kolongsu to the west, anchoring again in the old place.

It had been a strange contest and entirely one-sided. Each war junk had fired only a single broadside, and that when sailing as swiftly as wind and tide could carry past the anchored vessels. Not a shot in return had been fired, for each Tai Ping vessel had only enough men on board to protect from thieves, not to manage guns.

When the smoke had disappeared the rebel fleet lay unharmed, except by a few shots that had chanced to strike something besides the water. No vessel had sunk, not even a mast had been shot away. It appeared like a salute rather than a fight, and the shots that had hit seemed rather accidental than aimed.

The rebels on shore heard the firing, and leaving a few to watch the citadel, hurried on board their junks. With the turn of the tide they sailed toward the government vessels, fired a broadside into them, and then returned around Kolongsu westward to the old anchorage. Nor had there been much more harm done to the mandarin vessels than had been received from them. When the Tai Pings had shown that they were not afraid of their foes on the water, they hurried ashore and entered the citadel. Thus, whenever

they fought in the harbor, they were compelled for lack of men to bring their sailors from the garrison.

A day or two later the mandarin fleet left its anchorage and, bearing down on the rebel vessels, poured a broadside into them and returned as before. When wind and tide favored, the Tai Pings paid the government junks a similar visit.

Thus for several weeks was this sham fighting continued. At the end little harm had been done beyond a few splintered hulls and shattered masts. Not a vessel had been sunk or even rendered permanently helpless. It seemed fighting for fun.

It is true the official report sent to Pekin was very unlike this tame description. That told of battles and victories, of dreadful carnage and fearful destruction, yet failed to enumerate the dead because sunken vessels retain their slain.

A mandarin who lacks courage seldom lacks imagination. What his report wants in fact he makes up from fiction. What cares he so long as his report reads well and passes criticism? He is not after victory but safety. He cares less for promotion than he does for place. If he can hold what he has, he is fortunate. So many seek office, so many try to drive the possessors out, that the average official is content to hold on to what he has got. He who gets more is of course the more to be congratulated over his good fortune.

CHAPTER V.

CALAMITIES.

WHILE this mock warfare was going on between the fleets the soldiers on land were not idle. The mandarin troops waited for a day after reaching the shore, and then moved toward the citadel. Before coming within gunshot they took a position and prepared for battle.

The marching, the order, and the weapons of this army were rather those of a mob than of disciplined soldiers. Some had firearms, but old, and of still older pattern. Flintlock and matchlock muskets were the rule rather than the exception. Some had the old *gingal*, an immense gun carried by two men and resting on the shoulder of a soldier if it had no other support, when fired. Many had no firearms, but carried bows and arrows, spears, swords, pitchforks, knives, axes; indeed, almost everything that would do for a weapon.

Though badly armed, the troops were well supplied with flags and banners. Every fifth, if not fourth man carried on a staff a flag of some kind; it might be a three-cornered one, a streamer, or of some other shape, as long as it had a bright color, and could be

waved in the presence of an approaching foe. The Chinese think flags a great necessity for an army ; and that they indicate courage in the men carrying, and bring terror to the foes who see them.

The fighting that followed was as queer as the appearance of the soldiers. After the first volley from the firearms the soldiers forgot orders ; each loading and firing as he saw fit, and aiming at anything he chose. The bowmen discharged a few arrows, but saved most of their weapons for better service.

A few rebels appeared on the walls, and now and then fired a shot of defiance at the mandarin troops, but saved ammunition for real warfare, and used their tongues now. They dared the enemy to approach the wall, and declared that fear kept them out of danger. They threatened to send every mandarin soldier to a great roasting place if he came within reach of rebel shots.

After firing awhile the attacking party ceased using those weapons and tried their tongues instead ; so this became a war of words, in threats as harmless as they would have been horrible had they been carried out. While rebels called their foes mandarin robbers, and names far less favorable, they were in turn called long-haired rebels, red-headed thieves, and a variety of names that cannot be repeated.

Just why the Tai Pings were called red-headed is

uncertain. A red-headed Chinaman is very rare, if one ever existed. Perhaps the name meant that they were friendly to foreigners, who have hair in other shades than black and white.

With an intermission now and then of a day or two, this mock fighting on land was kept up as long as the sham fighting on the water. When it ended few soldiers were missing from either side; and much of the ammunition wasted had belonged to the mandarins. They had plenty, so used freely, and thus were able to make a good report to Pekin, and show that their forces had not been idle.

One day no soldier appeared on the walls of the citadel, and no shot answered the firing of the government troops; yet there was great activity within the walls. Then, without warning, the rebel army went out by a gate farthest from the mandarin forces, and hurried through the city toward the water. Everything was done so quietly and quickly, that people who saw, supposed another naval battle was to be fought; and that in a few hours the Tai Pings would be again within the citadel. Others noticed that within the walls no soldier remained.

The rebels hurried along, and, upon reaching the shore, were at once taken on board their vessels. Every junk was quickly under way, and then, instead of sailing in the direction of the mandarin fleet,

sailed westward and disappeared beyond Kolongsu. The Tai Pings had left Amoy and were on their way inland.

After the fleet had disappeared, a few straggling rebels came to the shore to find their comrades gone. Knowing what must be the consequence if found in the city, they hired a small vessel at an enormous price and followed the fleet. After these had gone others straggled to the shore; but it was too late to get away from Amoy. They sought safety in the city, yet it was a vain attempt.

Just why the rebels left Amoy so suddenly the author cannot tell. Some said that the mandarins had paid them a large price to go, others that the general Tai Ping government had refused to recognize them as part of the rebellion; still others that the government soldiers meant to fight in earnest soon; and then there must be a terrible and complete destruction of the rebels; so to save themselves they left suddenly.

The mandarin forces did not fire a shot at the departing foes. The war junks remained at anchor, and the land army waited until the rebels were safely out of reach before entering the citadel.

All this gave reason to believe that there had been a bargain between rebels and mandarins, and that Amoy had been given up for a price. If there was

an agreement made, it explains the mock battles, since neither side seemed to care to injure the other while there was a chance of settling the difficulty in another way. Surely the rebels at Amoy, as all Tai Pings, proved themselves brave men, capital fighters, and able to meet on the battle-field a larger number than their own of mandarin soldiers.

When the people learned that the mandarins had taken possession, doors were closed, bolted, and barred, and each person who could sought safety within his home. They believed the storm would come suddenly; feared it would be terrible; and hoped it would end speedily if there were no resistance.

Shortly after the rebels left the government troops entered the citadel, passed through and took possession of the whole city. They marched quickly but quietly, and many citizens did not learn that there had been a change of rulers until they saw mandarin soldiers near the door. When Amoy was in their power, then the men, who for six weeks had remained out of range of musket shots when facing armed soldiers, began to rob and murder peaceful citizens.

For slight reasons men were arrested, on a little additional provocation killed. He who was suspected of friendship for the rebellion had small chance for life if discovered on the street; if he had money, he

was unsafe at home. Money seemed a crime, the possession of valuables dangerous. The jingle of silver in the pocket was worse than a rebel cry.

The city was thronged with thieves and robbers who had waited for this harvest and marked houses for plunder before it came. Though most of the rascals belonged to bands of thieves and robbers, not a few soldiers joined in their work or sanctioned it for a share of the spoils. It was said that robbers pretended to be soldiers in search of Tai Pings, so forced entrance into many a house that would otherwise have resisted them to the last. If caught by honest soldiers, the scamps declared themselves serving the government and searching for suspected rebels. When houses were thus broken into, the rascals contented themselves usually with stripping it of every valuable easily carried away and allowed the people to remain unharmed. Chinese robbers, mean, cowardly, contemptible though they are, hesitate about taking life unless compelled to do so. But woe to the owner who persisted in defending his property. His dead body might be witness of his faithfulness, but the murderers proclaimed him a Tai Ping.

Though many imperial soldiers were robbers themselves or shared with others in the spoils, true, brave men were not wanting in the government service. When they were present men did not cry in vain for

help. The shriek of women and children did not fall on listless ears. Many a sword was bathed in blood or dulled by strokes that sent robbers to a final tribunal.

A dreadful change had taken place in Amoy a few hours after the departure of the Tai Pings. The streets were wet with blood and strewn with dead bodies. Broken doors revealed despoiled houses ; the screams of women, expostulations of men, proved that the work of robbers was going on. The more dreadful sounds of the fugitive shrieking for help, mercy, life, the despairing cry of the victim in the assassin's power, the agonizing groan of the poor wretch who was left to die slowly from wounds given, scarcely ceased during that first day ; and long into the night could be heard again and again the appeal, the shriek, the wail of agony, the groan of the dying.

The story of capture, death, and destruction is too dreadful for detail, too horrible for record ; even were it told, few would believe. Rebels were savagely cruel ; imperial troops and officials were demons when in power. In all his reading the writer never met such horrors as he heard from Chinese lips, and saw in the devastation caused by that dreadful rebellion. But Tai Pings failed to equal in barbarity the men who at last conquered them. If the devil ever becomes superannuated or unable to do his work, he may find an able

representative in some mandarin of China, unless that nation changes.

We turn to Mr. Lin. Early in the day of the departure of the Tai Pings he was accosted at the jetty by a stranger, well dressed, respectable, who hurriedly requested to be carried over to the mainland several miles to the west. The boatman refused. Not until an unusually large price was paid, and a pair of jade earrings added as a present, would he agree to carry the passenger.

“How soon do you wish to go?” asked Mr. Lin.

“At once,” was the reply.

“Have you any baggage?”

“None. I am hurried by business and may soon return. Can you go now?”

“Yes; jump in. The rebels may leave any day, and I must not be away when they go. I have heard nothing of their going to-day, so suppose they will wait at least until to-morrow.”

The boatman hurried over, landed his passenger, and made his way back as quickly as possible. Coming in sight of the rebel anchorage, he saw no vessels there. Casting a glance toward the government fleet, he saw those quietly at anchor.

What had become of the Tai Pings? Neither at anchor nor attacking the mandarins; where could they be? Surely had they made an assault on that fleet he

would have heard the firing, and must have seen the junks sailing around Kolongsu from the north as formerly. Had they gone westward up the river he must have seen them as he came from the mainland.

Meeting a boatman in the harbor he asked what had become of the rebels.

“They have left. They are sailing up the river now. They only disappeared a few minutes ago; they passed around Kolongsu on the south as you passed it on the north side,” was the reply.

Mr. Lin’s heart sank. The Tai Pings had gone; the city was already in the hands of the mandarins; and his home, family, and property unprotected. Quickly he landed and hurried homeward. Already were robbers and mandarin soldiers at work, one plying their business, the other permitting if not helping in deeds of rascality, as they pretended to guard the city.

Reaching home, the boatman’s worst fears were realized; his house had been broken into, and angry voices within told that robbers were at work. He heard his mother’s voice above others and hastened to the back room whence came the voices and where were kept his silver dollars. As he passed through the front room, he saw two soldiers examining his property; but his thoughts were on the dollars, and he stopped neither to order the men out nor ask what they were doing.

Mr. Lin found robbers breaking open the strong box holding his money, and his mother trying to prevent. Thinking not of consequences, the boatman struck a robber a blow that sent him to the floor, and prepared to attack another.

Hearing her husband's step and voice, the younger Mrs. Lin came from the room where she had stood guard over her child, and offered to help the boatman and his mother. The cowardly robbers, seeing danger to themselves, shouted to the soldiers for help. As the two came the rascals said :—

“ This is the owner of the house, the rebel of whom we told you. Take him to the mandarins, and they will attend to him. He helped the Tai Pings when they were in the city.”

“ I am not a rebel, but a friend to the government, as you will learn,” replied Mr. Lin to the soldiers who prepared to take him prisoner. “ I know many of the mandarins, and shall report and have you punished for breaking into my house and allowing these robbers to try to rob it.”

The boatman's manner more than his words made the soldiers fear to take him prisoner. When he named a number of the former mandarins of Amoy, and told who were to be in command of the city as soon as recaptured, they feared that they had made a mistake, and that instead of being a rebel he was more than a friend to the officials.

“If you know the mandarins, and they are your friends, you need not fear to meet them at the yamen (mandarin establishment). We will take you there and let you prove that you are a friend, not an enemy, to the government,” said a soldier.

“Take me and allow these robbers to steal my money!” replied the man. “No; first drive these men away, then let my house be guarded, and I will gladly go with you.”

While boatmen and soldiers were discussing the matter, one of the thieves moved around behind his companions, and, reaching the broken box, slyly picked out silver dollars and took them for his own.

“Stop stealing that money!” shouted old Mrs. Lin, rushing at the fellow.

This called the attention of the soldiers, and they let go of the boatman to seize the thief. That revealed to them the money in the box. Many a Chinaman, be he soldier or citizen, like people in other countries, forgets duty when he sees dollars within his reach. These men suddenly saw that duty bade them drive the robbers away, and they proceeded to do it.

“Get out of this room, and away from this house!” said one, raising his sword to strike the thieves. “Get away at once! You said that this man is a rebel, and persuaded us to let you break down the

door that we might get him ; and then you offered to go into the back rooms and find him while we kept guard at the front. But you came here to rob. Now go, if you would escape punishment ! ”

The soldier did not add that the scamps said there was valuable property hidden in the front rooms, and that the soldiers were searching for it when the owner entered.

The robbers were driven out, and in a few minutes the soldiers returned with a comrade, and told Mr. Lin that, to make certain that all was right, he must accompany the newcomer to the yamen. And, to secure his money, this soldier should carry it along to the mandarins, where it would be safe until order was restored ; then he could get it again.

“ One man cannot carry all that silver, and if he could, robbers would seize it before he reached the yamen,” said Mr. Lin.

“ Then one of us will remain to watch what he cannot carry,” replied a soldier.

Mr. Lin suspected the men, yet was forced to obey their order. He knew that if angered they might kill rather than lead him to the mandarins, and he hoped to return quickly to protect his property under official authority.

The money was divided, one package given to the soldier commissioned to take Mr. Lin to the yamen, and

the other left at his home in charge of a soldier. As the boatman was led away, the third soldier left to attend to other duties, but soon returned and declared that the remaining package of money must be taken to the yamen also; there was no safety in the house while so many robbers were about. In vain the women protested, urged, pleaded. The two soldiers prepared the money for transmission, and the one carried it away while the other stood guard at the door. A minute later he told the women that he must follow his comrade to protect him, or that the silver would be taken from him.

A few minutes after the last soldier went, the three robbers, accompanied by a fourth, entered and demanded the silver dollars. Finding no trace of them, and accepting as truth the statement of the women that the soldiers had taken it, the scamps busied themselves with gathering up valuables for removal. They were about leaving with their booty when they heard Tee Siek's cry in another room. The fellows gave each other a significant look and then, handing the spoils to one of the four, bidding him leave with the valuables, the other three started for the child.

“ You shall not have our child ! You shall not have our child ! ” shouted old Mrs. Lin, throwing herself against the door to hinder their entrance.

While the robbers were leisurely seeking to force

away the old lady and enter, the younger woman hastened to her child by another way, and was about carrying Tee Sick off when stopped by the rascals. While one held the grandmother, the other two tried to separate mother and child.

On the part of the younger Mrs. Lin this was a desperate struggle. She knew that, if the robbers succeeded, her child must leave her, and perhaps forever. Though one woman was not a match for the two men, even if her mother-in-law could hold the third man, she hoped to resist the fellows until her husband returned and could summon soldiers. Bidding Tee Sick clasp his arms tightly about her neck, she closed her own tightly about him, and pressed him with an almost death grip to her breast, and then bent over to shield him further by her own body.

The men, knowing their power, made no great effort to conquer at once, but thought better to wait until the mother, wearied with her exertions, should give up in exhaustion.

At last they separated mother and child, and one hurried away with the little one as the other held Mrs. Lin.

When she saw her son borne away, the mother with superhuman strength broke from her captor and started in pursuit of the robber and her screaming child. Before she reached the street she was seized by the man from whom she was escaping and forced back.

For a few minutes the rascals held the two women, and then letting them go, hastily escaped to the street. Mother and grandmother followed them closely, and as each scamp passed beyond the door, pursued them as they separated, one going up, the other down the street.

It was a vain pursuit. The rascals speedily distanced the women and disappeared.

A few moments sufficed to convince Mrs. Lin and her mother-in-law that pursuit was worse than useless. They were leaving home open and unprotected. Returning to the house they realized the dreadful truth that Tee Siek had been stolen. By whom he had been taken and whither they knew not.

CHAPTER VI.

SEEKING THE LOST.

DISORDER reigned in the yamen as the soldier brought the boatman in. Prisoners in crowds under guard waited until a prison could be prepared. Officers were shouting, servants hurrying to and fro, and soldiers hastening away to obey their superiors.

“ What charge do you make against this man ? ” asked a mandarin to whom the soldier brought his prisoner.

“ He is a rebel,” was the reply.

“ He is not a rebel, but a friend of the empire. Let him go ; and if you can be at no better business than arresting good men, we will give you something to do that you will not like,” replied the officer, recognizing Mr. Lin.

As the soldier was hurrying away without handing over the money, the owner spoke of it to the officer. No time was lost in summoning the soldier back and ordering him to give up the silver.

“ Is that all ? ” asked the mandarin. “ Let me examine you. So you meant to keep a share for your services, did you ? Wait ; let me see if you have hidden any more.”

The soldier had succeeded in removing a number of dollars from the money and secreting them in his clothing. After a thorough examination he was dismissed and the silver retained by the officer.

“ You would better leave this here for safe-keeping until order is restored. You can call for it then,” spoke the mandarin, coolly taking the money as if his own.

Mr. Lin objected in vain. He was told that such a sum would expose his life to every robber in the city, should he carry it through the town or even keep it at home during the present disorder. The boatman could but submit, hoping that he would have no trouble to get his property back as soon as order was restored.

Reaching home he found his wife and mother hardly able to speak because of the excitement caused by the loss of the child. The father listened in silence as they told in broken sentences the story, and then he sat as if paralyzed. He asked no questions, made no response, until his mother said that the soldiers had taken away the remainder of his money.

“ What! my money! ” cried the man, springing to his feet and hurrying to make an examination.

Every dollar had been taken. Mr. Lin was wild with excitement; furious at the rascally soldiers.

“ You care more for your money than you do for your child,” said the elder woman bitterly.

“ My child has been taken for a ransom ; my money will never return. And how can I ransom him without that ? ”

“ Do you mean to wait until his captors bring him back for a ransom ? ” inquired the grandmother. “ Will you leave him sad, suffering, dying among thieves, until they are ready to sell him back to you ? Do you forget that he is your own flesh and bones ? Have you lost the heart of a father ? Is this the son I bore and nourished ? He hears in silence that his son is stolen. He becomes furious when his money is gone. You are no son of mine. You are unworthy . ”

“ My worthy mother forgets that children are often stolen and returned for a ransom ; but stolen money never is restored. Those who have taken our child will take good care of and bring him back, as soon as they can make sure of a ransom. But how can I pay that if my money is gone ? ”

“ Do you forget that at the yamen ? ” asked the mother.

“ Mandarins are little better than thieves. They never let money go unless compelled to, no matter whose it be . ”

“ And you mean to do nothing to recover your child ? ”

“ My mother will understand, if she carefully considers, that a search now would be worse than useless.

Where shall I seek him? Should he be discovered his captors may kill him now, lest they suffer for taking him. If undisturbed they will take good care of him, and in time we shall hear from our child. They will let us know how we may get him and the price of the ransom. Many others have suffered as we do, but in time they regained their children for a price. That price will be less if we seem in no hurry to regain him."

"This has come upon us because you refuse to serve the gods. It is what I expected and foretold. But I did not foresee that my son could be robbed of his child and yet speak calmly of it, as though a boat or clothing had been taken. Neglect of gods has changed his heart to stone."

"My noble mother will please remember that search would be worse than vain now, and would take me from my home, my wife, and venerable mother. Should robbers come and remove what remains, and slay her who gave me birth, what remedy would there be? What could I do? What excuse would there be for neglecting my mother? Money will restore a stolen child but cannot bring back a murdered mother. My heart is not hard, but my head controls it."

Mrs. Lin, the elder, could not let her son have the last word, but she finally yielded and admitted that he was not altogether wrong, though she laid the whole blame on his indifference to the gods.

The boatman sought the assistance of mandarins in the search for his child and lost money, but was told that more important business required their attention. As soon as order was restored and business began again, they would do what they could to help him.

“Will the mandarins find your child?” asked old Mrs. Lin on her son’s return.

“They say it is useless to make any attempt now, though later they will help. But they told me that the soldiers who took the remainder of the money have brought none to the yamen. It is as I expected,” answered the boatman sadly.

“It is a just punishment, and proves true what I said. You could make money without the help of the gods, yet you could not keep it without them. Though this will be a costly lesson, I hope you will learn it well, and practice in future what you learn. Though for a while you succeed without the help of the gods, sooner or later they show that you cannot do without them forever.”

“My worthy mother will please remember that I earned the money given to the gods; and that she and my wife have worshiped most faithfully in the temples. So if they punish us this way they are very ungrateful.”

“Your wife faithful to the temples? She seldom visits them unless I urge it. I alone am the faithful

one in the family ; and had it not been for me the gods might have entirely forgotten you."

" And now they have rewarded your faithfulness by allowing your grandchild to be stolen, and the money laid up for him taken away. Before you gave them so much, and such faithfulness was shown from my home, they at least permitted me to keep what I earned," replied Mr. Lin bitterly.

" If they must compel me to suffer that they may punish you, I submit meekly ; will gladly, if it but bring my son back to their service. Then I know they will restore your silver and your son."

" When they return what they have allowed to be taken away then I will return, not before," spoke the boatman emphatically.

" Beware, my son ! Do not anger the gods still more ! Their worst punishments have not come, but you may bring them."

As soon as quiet was restored Mr. Lin engaged men in the search for his child, and offered in addition a large sum of money for his return. Beside this, he offered a reward for the discovery of the thieving soldiers if the money be recovered with their discovery.

Though he heard nothing of money or child, many other children were brought ; these resembled more or less the missing Tee Siek. Each was declared to be the stolen one ; and many were the reasons given for

differences between them and the lost child. One explanation was that illness, another that accident, had produced the change. Still others declared that the robbers had disfigured the stolen one to prevent his recognition. When Mr. Lin refused to accept any of the children brought, he had other visitors and other offers. Men told that they had discovered but could not regain his child without money. If a sufficient sum were paid, they would take the father to Tee Siek, or put him on track of the robbers. To all offers the father replied that the reward was ready for the return of the child, not for attempts at finding him. As soon as Tee Sick was returned the reward should be paid him who brought him back, and no questions asked.

“Why not adopt a child?” asked an old priest of the grandmother at a temple.

“Our child took our hearts with him, and no stranger can bring them back,” was the reply.

“Were you to pretend to adopt a child, the thieves might hurry yours back, lest they lose entirely the ransom,” suggested the priest.

Mr. Lin accepted favorably this proposition, and pretended that, since his child was doubtless dead, he meant to adopt another. But few children were offered; and those rejected. Chinese seldom pay much if anything for a son for adoption; hence few offers came.

The boatman did not forget the money at the yamen, though for months he was unable to get it back. The mandarins declined to return until peace was restored; then they urged that, since he had requested them to search for the child, they must keep the money as security that he would pay the reward; further, since the search required money, and they could not pay from their small salaries, it was but fair that the expense be taken from his property in their possession.

“I must have that money,” said the boatman, after waiting and calling again and again for it in vain.

“Can you prove which is yours?” asked a mandarin who professed to know nothing about the property. “Nothing was said to me about you when I was placed in charge here; though considerable money was brought in during the difficulty. How shall I be sure that another will not claim it, if I pay over a portion to you?”

“Mine had my stamp on it,” replied the boatman.

“Did not you put your stamp on money that you paid out during the past years of prosperity? And will you claim all that has passed through your hands?”

To this Mr. Lin could not give a satisfactory answer. It is the Chinese custom to stamp every dollar, passing through the hands of a firm, with the name or sign of that firm. Thus silver dollars, the only coins, except

the copper cash, in general use, become in time defaced and broken in pieces, and absolutely useless, by constant stamping.

Unable to get his money, Mr. Lin appealed to the Tautai at Tong Wan, to whom the mandarins at Amoy are subject. Giving that officer a valuable present, the boatman interested him, and was bidden to say nothing about the visit nor apply again for the money. Said the official :—

“ I am glad to be able to bring those dishonest men at Amoy to justice. Leave the matter to me, and you shall have your money.”

Later the Tautai visited Amoy on business ; and, when ready to return, he asked :—

“ Have you paid back to Lin Tun, the boatman, the money brought here for safe-keeping months ago ? No ; I know you have not. Attend to it at once. I will remain here and see that the matter is settled ; we cannot afford to be responsible longer for money in that way.”

This command amazed the officers, and they wondered how the Tautai knew. Quickly recovering from the surprise, they said that they would inquire into the matter and attend to it at once.

“ Do you mean to say that you know nothing about it ? If that be so, then surely it is necessary that I remain and attend to the matter myself.”

In vain the men protested that they knew nothing about the money, and that those who had received it were not in Amoy.

“Some of you were here, and if you do not know about this, it is evident that you are unfit for your position. Though unfit, you cannot resign until you see that the missing money is returned.”

The mandarins saw that the Tautai was as determined as he was able to punish ; yet they were unwilling to give up that silver without an effort to keep part. Professing to search for it, and to learn how much belonged to the boatman, how much to others, they hurried a messenger to Mr. Lin and offered to restore his property if he would allow half for expense in searching after his child and trying to discover the soldiers who stole the other portion. The messenger added that some should be paid also for safe-keeping.

“I will pay what expense has been incurred as soon as the stolen money is returned or child recovered. But neither has anything to do with the dollars withheld from me. The soldier took those contrary to my wish ; they have been kept in spite of my demand, and I shall not pay one dollar,” was his reply.

While this messenger was away, the mandarins reported to the Tautai that two clerks had stolen the boatman’s property and disappeared, nor did any one know what had become of them.

“Very well; then you admit that the money was in the safe-keeping of the yamen, and stolen by those under your control. Send for the boatman and pay him. Since you have allowed such robbery without reporting it, you must suffer. The man must be paid every cash.”

In vain the officers tried to escape. They sent for Mr. Lin. When he appeared the Tautai asked:—

“Are you the man who gave money to the officers for safe-keeping here?”

The boatman told the story of the soldiers carrying off from his home, against his own and his family’s protest, all his money; and said that only half was brought to the yamen when he was arrested.

“I see,” spoke the chief. “The soldiers and mandarins here have robbed you and meant to keep all. They will now pay the half left here. We will see later about the remainder.”

The officers urged that they should at least retain some to pay for safe-keeping.

“What! rob a man and then demand pay for keeping him out of his money for several months?” replied the chief indignantly.

Again the officials claimed money to pay expense in the search after the other portion of property.

“That is, you mean to make the owner pay for the rascality of those in your service. I am not sure but

you should pay every dollar of the other half. However, this must be attended to now."

After pleading for an allowance to pay expenses in the search for Tee Siek, the mandarins waited, hoping that they need not pay all.

"Have you discovered the child? Have you tried to do so? Has not the father offered a reward for his recovery? Have you any reason to doubt that he will pay as soon as you bring his son to him?" asked the Tautai. "All that belongs to another business. What you must do now is pay to this man every dollar brought you by that soldier."

Nor would the chief listen to any excuse; neither would he allow delay. The money was paid to Mr. Lin and he was dismissed.

"Now," spoke the Tautai, "you must discover and punish the clerks who stole the money. What were their names?"

Confusion followed this demand. What would have been the outcome cannot be told. A shrewd old man, seeing the difficulty, stepped forward, and bowing respectfully to the Tautai, said:—

"Your Excellency sees the confusion of these worthy officers, but does not fully comprehend their feelings. This is the first offense of the young clerks; doubtless they yielded in a moment of weakness. If brought to punishment, without opportunity to repent,

they will be ruined. If given a chance to return the money and make confession, no doubt they will do it. That will save to the government two who may in time become worthy and faithful servants of the Middle Kingdom. I am certain that they already mourn their folly, and only wait an opportunity to show their good purpose. Allow them a single month and I am sure you will not regret it."

"Very well. If they return you the money, show that they repent, and prove their purpose to serve faithfully the government, this first crime shall be forgiven. But if they do not return the money within a month, you shall hear from me."

Before the month passed, the Tautai had something else to do than inquire into the dishonesty of the clerks. Charges had been preferred against him, and he was compelled to meet them. Though he proved himself innocent, he was transferred to another part of the country, and the Amoy mandarins were relieved of anxiety.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROBBERS' FATE.

GRATEFUL to the Tong Wan Tautai for what he had done, Mr. Lin made him another visit, soon after regaining his money, to talk further about the other half and the missing child. Again he gave a costly present to the official, and was welcomed. Said the Tautai:—

“I thank you very much for your presents, and yet hesitate to accept. Of course it is the custom; but it is not a good custom, and produces great evil. It is true that mandarins receive small salaries, and are liable to be dismissed at any time; therefore, they accept and make all they can while in office; but if there were more honesty, there would be less danger of dismissal. I speak frankly to you, but dare not say as much to my fellows. A few agree with me; many differ so decidedly that such sentiments are enough to make him who utters them a victim of suspicion, if not of charges to the higher officials. As for your money, I can promise little. My course in getting back what was kept in the yamen has made nearly every man there my foe. I will, however, do what I can, but fear those men will prefer charges against me

that will need all my time and ability to meet successfully. Your son may be alive ; yet it seems doubtful. The ransom offered surely would have brought him back long ago had he been in or near Amoy. It is possible that he has been taken far away ; in that case you may hear from him at any time, and may not for years. Perhaps you will never hear anything further. I am sorry for you, and mourn that such things can happen so easily in our country without the robbers being discovered. I know, from your liberality to me, that you will repay all expenses incurred, and I will do what I can to discover the missing child."

The boatman heard nothing further from Tong Wan, so visited the yamen again to be told that the Tautai was away ; and, if at the yamen, could give no time to ordinary business. It was hinted that he had been charged with crime that might remove him from Tong Wan, if not from office entirely. Seeing the boatman's distress, the official who gave this information asked :—

"Is there anything I can do? In the Tautai's absence I am permitted to attend to some of his business."

Mr. Lin made known his trouble and was told by the officer :—

"I think I can get back at least a part of that money. I am willing to try. As for your child, I fear

there is little hope. If you are willing to intrust the recovery of that money to me, and agree to pay what expense may be incurred, I will see what can be done. And I think something should be paid me for my trouble."

The boatman replied that he was willing to pay all reasonable expenses, and something beside for time and trouble.

"I will agree to get back that money, if possible, for one half," said the mandarin.

To this Mr. Lin objected, and finally an agreement was made that the officer have one fourth, if he recover all that was missing.

"What if it be found that the robbers have spent or gambled away all the money when caught?" asked the mandarin. "You would hardly expect me to pay from my own pocket for bringing them to punishment?"

"That will be the business of the government, and not my affair," responded Mr. Lin.

"Yet the government does not pay for services rendered an individual. I may be at great expense in this matter; and, though I discover the rascals, may gain nothing to remunerate me. I hardly think I can undertake the business, unless you promise to pay at least a part of the expense, in case I fail to recover the money, yet bring the thieves to judgment.

Remember, if the money is recovered, I pay all expenses myself and receive one fourth of the money."

After considerable discussion the boatman agreed to pay no more than fifty dollars' expense, and signed a paper to that effect.

"And you say the soldiers took your money?" asked the officer after making out the paper.

"Yes."

"Then they are the ones I must discover and arrest?"

"Yes."

A month later Mr. Lin was summoned to the Amoy yamen to identify the robbers. To his surprise and joy the identical soldiers had been discovered, arrested, and were now awaiting trial for robbing his house of a large sum of silver money.

The boatman told his story, and then the rascals told theirs. The two accounts agreed exactly in facts, differed entirely in motives, and differed in that Mr. Lin said nothing beyond the departure of the soldiers with the money from his house. In brief this is the story of the soldiers:—

"We learned, after the honorable man had accompanied our comrade to the yamen with half of his silver, that he is a faithful friend of the empire, and so knew that it was our duty to protect his property. That money would be unsafe at his house, since the

robbers had seen it, so it must be taken to the yamen with the other. In the excitement it would be unsafe for one man to carry it, so both of us took it. On our way we were beset by a band of robbers who overpowered us, took away the silver, and hurried us into a house where they kept us captives until yesterday. Then they let us go, but without the money. We hastened to the yamen and reported. Sent back at once to our prison, we found no trace of robbers nor money. Who they are, whither they have gone, we do not know."

Mr. Lin did not believe the last of their story, but he could not prove it false, nor could he prove that they meant to steal, rather than bring his dollars to the yamen. He was simply powerless to regain his money or have the rascals punished. Urged for evidence that the men were dishonest, he could only tell his story over again and add his belief. He had never seen the soldiers before nor since. Others testified that they had always been honest, faithful men, and that their story was likely true.

"It would be not only unjust but cruel to punish or hold these men," said the judge. "From their own story, and no testimony whatever to prove it false has been brought, they have been imprisoned for doing their duty and serving the owner of the missing money. Instead of testifying against and

seeking to have them punished, the owner should show them gratitude, and even reward their faithfulness."

The soldiers were discharged, the case ended, and Mr. Lin was about to leave with a heavy heart, and soul enraged at mandarins and soldiers.

"I am sorry to trouble you," said the Tong Wan mandarin, presenting the agreement signed by the boatman to pay fifty dollars toward expenses, "but I must ask for the fifty dollars promised in this agreement. My expense has been much greater; but since we have proven that two honest men, and your faithful friends, have suffered months of imprisonment for your sake, you surely will not object to sharing the expense with me. It required this past month of search and effort to discover the captives, and then to lay plans to capture the robbers. Unfortunately they learned that they were to be attacked, captured, and forced to give up their spoils, probably with their lives, and they departed. Yet I am willing to pay part of the expense for the sake of getting rid of such a band of rascals, for I am sure they will never dare appear again in Amoy. And I am the more glad to divide the cost with such a worthy friend, since he now has evidence that his country's soldiers are trusty and true."

Mr. Lin at first refused to pay one dollar. He

insisted that, since not a dollar had been returned, it was not his to pay for discovery of the robbers and release of the captives.

“ And you refuse to keep your agreement? ” asked the mandarin. “ Do you know what the consequences will be? Here is the paper with your stamp on it; that you cannot deny. You may pay or be arrested; and then you know not how long you may be punished for refusing to keep your agreement. You will be compelled to pay every dollar, and all expense of trial beside.”

Mr. Lin saw that he was the victim of the shrewd mandarin and paid the money. So ended, as he hoped forever, his business with mandarins.

The Tong Wan mandarin had visited Amoy on official business, and by questions and bribes learned enough regarding the robbery to suspect that officials there knew about it, if they had not shared in the results. Shrewdly pursuing his inquiries, he also enlisted others to learn more facts by promise of a share in the missing money if discovered. When he had sufficient evidence, instead of bringing charges against the guilty officers, he saw them individually in private, and gave each to understand that the others had, for the sake of escaping punishment, given him half of their share of the spoils.

At first each rascal denied that he had anything to

do with the robbery, or knew about the money. Presented with evidence, each in turn was forced to admit that he did know and had shared in the crime, but did it to save himself from financial difficulty. In the end each scamp divided his share and gave half of it to the mandarin from Tong Wan.

The discovery of the guilty soldiers was of course easy. They were approached by the shrewd official, and warned that all was known, but not yet made public. Their only escape lay in paying back to the mandarin half of their half of the stolen dollars. One had gambled his away, and could furnish only a very small sum to meet the demand. Rather than have the affair reported and a trial follow, the guilty officials pleaded with the Tong Wan official to be lenient. On condition that they make up a part of the money sought, they were allowed their request.

After that, the man so active in bringing rascals to justice had but to invent the story of imprisonment and teach it to the soldiers, and he was ready to summon the boatman.

We turn now to the other robbers. He who carried Tee Siek away, hurried home, gave the child to his wife, and told her that the little one's father had just been killed. Before death he gave his only son in charge of the man, with a request that he be kept from relatives of the dead mother, since the father had

none near Amoy. Then, bidding her be careful to keep the child hidden, he returned to his comrades.

They had already begun to rob a house marked before for spoiling, though only two were present. The third had either been killed or had run away with his booty.

A brave, faithful soldier, seeing the thief enter the building, hurriedly called a comrade as true as himself, and the two, with drawn swords, entered the house from which the owners had escaped, and surprised the villains at work. Bidding them surrender, the soldiers prepared to enforce the demand. Keeping the door behind them, they advanced slowly, carefully, on the foe, and watched an opportunity to wound or kill without being hurt in return.

Seeing themselves apprehended, the thieves at first tried to buy, then beg off; failing in both, they sought by shrewdness to escape arrest. But they had men to deal with who were as shrewd as themselves, and far better prepared for battle. The robbers had no other weapons at hand than knives, and with those they prepared to defend themselves. Like cornered rats, they meant to fight only until they could run away.

Seeing a good chance to strike, a soldier dealt a blow to the robber nearest and wounded him. The sight of a comrade's blood made the others, as well as

the wounded man, desperate, and both the brave men were forced to repel an assault. Though they kept two away, they missed the third.

This fellow, seeing that his comrades were drawing the attention of the swordsmen, crept around to stab them in the back. He might have done so had not the quick eye of the comrade of the soldier most in danger seen the rascal's purpose and warned him.

“Guard me,” said he as his sword swept toward the sneak.

Fortunate was it for the fellow that the blade missed its aim. It, however, taught that the brave men were watchful; and to wound them they must take more risks themselves. Coming to face the soldiers, the sneak moved with his fellows steadily upon them, and then sprang forward as if by a single impulse.

Each soldier was wounded by the charge, though not dangerously, and two rascals were suffering more seriously from sword strokes. Both sides were more careful, and the scamps more determined to escape. A desperate effort to reach the door was unsuccessful. Another to take the brave men unawares had a like result. Again a fellow, while his two comrades engaged the attention of the soldiers, sought to attack them in the rear.

“Guard me!” spoke the man upon whom the thief was making the attempt.

A stroke of the sword did not miss this time; and a rascal lay bleeding, helpless, and dying. The fight was now even as to number, unequal as to weapons.

Seeing that only by desperate measures could they hope to conquer or escape, the robbers sprang at their foe where knives would prove better weapons than swords. Their purpose was suspected; their efforts met by determined men. The result was the death wound to a robber, two wounds given to his comrade, and each soldier cut in the struggle. The wounded robber, though not entirely disabled, seeing that he could not hope to conquer, fell on his knees and begged for mercy.

The soldiers were as merciful as brave, and the fellow's prayer was granted. They lifted him up and bade him prepare to accompany them to the yamen. Before starting the conquerors examined and bound up their own wounds, but neglected to care for those of their prisoner. They saw that he was dangerously wounded and partly disabled, though his wounds were in the upper part of his body and in his arms, so he could walk readily.

The fellow seemed so humble and obedient that they thought it hardly necessary to bind him or take any further precaution. Second thought prompted that they tie his hands; thus one could lead him to the yamen, leaving the other to attend to other duties.

The captive walked meekly by his captor's side, nor allowed him to see a motion to a fellow robber met in the street. The two had gone a short distance when rapid footsteps were heard behind. A moment later three men ran against, knocked over, and lay seemingly stunned upon the soldier. Recovering their senses after a little, they arose and apologized profusely for what they had done, saying that they were in great haste and did not notice anybody in front of them. A moment later they were running swiftly away.

The bruised, stunned soldier looked around to see where he was, what had happened, and then sought his prisoner. The man was not by his side, nor to be seen at all. He had escaped. The soldier scrambled to his feet and turned sadly back to tell his comrade how the prisoner had escaped.

The captive, knowing that efforts would be made for his release as soon as he attracted the attention of a friend, was ready to take advantage of the first attempt. He knew the meaning of rapid feet, and when his captor fell under the runners, he only waited for one to cut his bands and then hurried away.

Though seriously wounded, the thief could walk well, and lost no time in getting far away from the scenes of robbery and escape. Reaching comparative safety, he sat down to examine his wounds and decide

on further movements. Seeing a trusted friend, he advised with him and was told :—

“ You must get away and do something at once for those wounds. If you do not, they may kill you. You cannot do any more business for a month. It is too bad, too. There never was a better time for our business.”

“ But I must go home first,” responded the robber.

“ Don’t do it. Get out of Amoy, as far away as possible. Go to your wife’s father’s. Stay there until you recover. To return home will be to put yourself in the power of the soldiers at once.”

“ How will I let my wife know? We have a little boy belonging to us. His father gave him to me when he died, and I want her to take him to meet me at her father’s. Will you tell her?”

“ Yes, if you pay me two dollars. It is dangerous to go there now. I will do it after dark.”

“ I will pay two dollars the next time I see you, if you tell her and help her out of the city with the boy to-morrow.”

“ What if we never meet again?”

“ We’ll meet again, and both with far more money than we have now.”

“ I will not take the risk. And you must go as soon as possible. Give me two dollars and I will take your message.”

The bargain was made, only one dollar was paid now, the other to be paid at the next meeting. Then the wounded thief started for the distant village.

He thought of his dead comrades, and that the ransom of the child would be his alone ; so after all, he could afford to lose this harvest season and rest for a month. Walking northward until far enough beyond the city, he employed a boatman to take him to the mainland, and then started afoot and alone for his father-in-law's home. He felt now, after sitting a while in the boat, the effects of his wounds. Though able to walk, he felt weak from loss of blood, and exhausted from the great struggle and nervous strain.

Some miles from the water he sank exhausted under a tree as night came on, and sought rest. Hungry, faint, suffering from his wounds, he lay restless, then sank into a troubled sleep. Before morning he was delirious.

Shortly after daybreak two laborers on their way to work heard mutterings and turned from their path to see who spoke. They saw a human form under a tree, tossing to and fro, rising on his feet, sinking again to earth, muttering meanwhile unintelligibly ; and believing the man insane, were about hastening on when they heard the jingle of silver in the pocket of the supposed madman.

Though Chinese fear insane people, they love silver

more, and the ruling passion drew these to the suffering creature. Listening, they caught enough from his words and appearance to suspect his character and condition. After brief deliberation they carried him to their village, and shutting him up in a small room, kept watch over the poor delirious man. Neighbors needed but to know that he was insane to leave him to his guards.

In a few days the fever had done its work, and the dead robber was quietly buried by his captors. They explained, as far as seemed necessary, their conduct, but made no mention of the few silver dollars found on the body; nor were they asked. It was enough that they generously cared for a sick insane stranger and gave his body decent burial. Thus ended the career of the man who stole Tee Siek.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOUND AT LAST.

AFTER her husband left, Mrs. May, the robber's wife, tried to quiet Tee Siek and learn about his home and parents. He told of his father, mother, grandmother, and baby sister; said that he lived in a large house, but could not tell where, nor yet give his father's name. He told how the men tore him from his mother, and begged to be taken back. Not until she promised could Mrs. May keep him quiet.

That evening the friend came with the message of the wounded robber, and explained his delay by saying that he dared not come earlier lest the soldiers see and arrest him.

"Was my husband badly hurt?" asked the woman.

"Yes, though he did not think so. It will require fully a month for recovery. This is a great pity, since we never had such a good time for business. Had I not such opportunities for work to-morrow I would help you out of the city; but I must gather up what people have left behind."

Early the next morning Mrs. May, carrying a heavy package and leading Tee Siek, started for her distant home.

“This is not the way to my home,” cried the child when they reached the open country.

“Be quiet or the bad men will hear. I must take you away from them first. If they see or hear you, they will carry you off so far that you will never find your father and mother again.”

Reaching the shore a mile or two north of the city, Mrs. May hired a boat and crossed to the mainland. There she employed a sedan chair, and on the evening of the third day reached her father’s house.

The robber’s wife told her father, Mr. Nu, about her husband and the child, and asked what she should do with him.

“Keep him until your husband comes,” was the answer. “No doubt he will be here in a day or two, unless his wounds prevent. Perhaps they are not as serious as his friend supposed, so he may have returned to business. He is too shrewd and active a man to lose such a chance to make money; and if possible he will stay near Amoy until business is dull again.”

“But what if his wounds are so bad that he cannot come home?” asked the wife.

“Never fear. If he was able to get away from the city at all, he will reach us, though he may be obliged to travel slowly. He is a very strong man and not easily conquered by disease or wounds. He has been

wounded before and has escaped from many other difficulties ; he will from this.”

Mrs. May’s father knew that her husband belonged to a gang of robbers. Instead of being displeased, Mr. Nu was glad to have a son-in-law who had so much money, and gave no little share of it to his wife’s father.

“ That child’s parents are wealthy,” said Mr. Nu after examining Tee Siek’s clothing, “ and they will pay a large ransom for him. So we must give him the best of care.”

“ Father, if my husband does not come, shall we try to get the ransom ? ” asked Mrs. May after waiting in vain more than a month for the robber’s return.

“ It will be time enough to decide that when assured that he will not come back. He has been away more than three months at a time heretofore, and doubtless will appear again. I am in no haste to part with the child. He seems like my own grandchild.”

More than three months passed and no tidings from the robber. His wife became alarmed, and even her father admitted that something serious had happened. Replying to his daughter he said : —

“ True, he had never been away so long before without sending word. Yet, remember, that if he has been captured, and that is possible, he does not lack for friends to help, nor for money to buy his freedom.

His friends may be obliged to allow him to be imprisoned for a time, then they will get him out. Be not needlessly alarmed. He will come back, as he has so often before when you feared he was dead."

Mr. Nu's neighbors had been told that Tee Siek was his daughter's adopted son. Since it is common for married people who have none of their own to adopt children, the villagers believed this and asked no questions.

Several months after Tee Siek was stolen an Amoy man visited a neighbor of Mr. Nu, and was asked if he was acquainted with Mr. May. Replying that he had never heard of the missing robber, he was told of his disappearance, and that his wife, with their adopted son, had made her home in the village since the capture of Amoy. The visitor showed little interest in the story until told of an adopted son. Then he asked about Tee Siek, and, without telling why, requested to be shown the child. Soon after the visitor, pleading urgent business, hurried home.

Reaching Amoy he called on Mr. Lin and said that he had seen in a distant village a child resembling Tee Siek. A brief description aroused the father's interest; but when the man demanded a large sum of money before he would take the boatman to, or even tell the name of the village, Mr. Lin said:—

"Your story ends like all the others, with a demand for money. I am tired of them."

“Wait until I tell you more about the child,” said the man. Then he described Tee Siek more fully and asked, “Tell me, is that your child?”

“Yes; that is my child. Have you seen him? Where is he? How can I get him? Take me to him! Take me to my child and I will pay you the reward offered for his recovery.”

“Put that in writing and I will do it, if you will pay all expenses. I will take you to the house and show you your son. If it is not your child, then you need not pay one cash except the traveling expenses. But I do not promise to release him, only to show where he is.”

Mr. Lin was so certain from the description of the discovery of his son, that he had a writer draw up the agreement at once. This was signed and then the boatman went home to prepare for the journey.

“My son must not be too hopeful,” said old Mrs. Lin. “He will remember how often before he has been disappointed. And yet, why should not the gods hear my prayer?”

Early the next morning the two men started. No expense was spared. Instead of hiring one sedan chair, the travelers riding in turn, two were engaged, and the bearers promised extra pay if the journey were made in two rather than three days.

The men were changed often, each pair doing the

utmost to win a share of the reward ; and, late in the afternoon of the second day, the travelers reached the home of the friend of Mr. Lai, the boatman's companion.

Mr. Lin could not wait until the next day ; and, pleading urgent business, persuaded Mr. Ban, the host, to take him over to call on the neighbor. Chinese politeness forbids a man to make known at once the object of his call, so Mr. Lin talked and listened, looked and longed in vain for anything telling of Tee Siek's presence. Lest the prolonged call arouse the suspicions of Mr. Nu, the boatman asked :—

“ Am I rightly informed that you wish to adopt a son ? ”

“ Why should I ? Some day I hope to have a grandson, and shall not need a son.”

“ Then your daughter has no children ? ”

“ None.”

“ The Fates have dealt hardly with you.”

“ They have.”

“ What will your spirit do if called away before a grandson is born ? ”

“ My daughter and her husband will care for my wants in the other world.”

“ But should both at last join you and leave no children, yours must be a sad existence there.”

“ True ; yet like many others.”

“Would not you adopt a son if one were offered by parents who can spare a child?”

“Perhaps so. Do you know of any?”

“I do. There are parents who have several, and one may die if he remains near the seacoast; so they wish me to find worthy people far inland who will prove loving and worthy. Your daughter, I understand, lived in Amoy, and she may know the parents. She is now living with you, you said?”

“Yes.”

“And she brought a child with her, did she not?”

This question, less impertinent to a Chinaman than to us, surprised Mr. Nu, and he could not for a moment think of a proper reply. Evidently the stranger knew about the child; and denial would be useless. Mr. Lin had aroused the suspicions of the robber’s father-in-law when introduced as from Amoy. Strangers had often called before on other errands, but really to find Mr. May, so he suspected this visit had a like purpose. But the question aroused another danger. Perhaps the best escape was to own what could not be denied, and add a lie, to save further trouble; so thought the man, and he answered:—

“Yes; the child of her husband’s friend. Both have been in Anam for a year; and since the child’s mother and near relatives are dead, the friend gave him to my daughter while he and my son-in-law remain

in a foreign land. I sent word to her to bring him here ; but she preferred to remain in Amoy. However, when trouble came she obeyed, and will stay with me until her husband returns. Since the child regards her as mother, we call him her adopted son ; but his father doubtless will demand him again. Then I may wish to adopt a son. Will you kindly tell me about the one of whom you spoke?"

"Certainly."

Then Mr. Lin described Tee Siek accurately.

"He is no doubt a most beautiful child," responded Mr. Nu, who had shown no little surprise at first, but quickly hid his feelings.

"I should have added that this child was sent up to one of these villages ; and, when the father knew that business would take me this way, he requested me to see his son and find a good man who will adopt him. Since I do not know which village, and have carelessly forgotten the man's name with whom he is staying, I must make all inquiries, and see each child under four years of age. So it will not do to pass any by. Should I miss the little one, his father would think me very careless. Will you allow me to see the child under your daughter's care?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Nu. "I will bring him at once."

Mr. Nu left the room and remained away several minutes. On his return he said :—

“I beg ten thousand pardons, but he is asleep now; and my daughter asks if you will kindly wait until morning. She will have him ready then if you call.”

“I must visit other villages early in the morning,” replied Mr. Lin. “It will not disturb him to give him a single glance to-night.”

It was useless to argue; the boatman’s request was most politely but firmly refused. He was bidden to call before starting for the other villages, and promised that the child should be seen, even though asleep.

Further urging would be worse than useless, and Mr. Lin and companions left, the boatman promising to call early the next day.

Mr. Ban was now told Mr. Lin’s business. A present made him the boatman’s firm friend; and he showed that friendship by giving advice. Said he:—

“Mr. Nu’s tongue is very smooth, so are his hands and feet. You must watch closely or you will fail to see their movements.”

“What do you mean?” asked the boatman.

“That child may not be there when morning comes.”

“But he said he would allow me to see it,” replied Mr. Lin.

“True; and he said also that they must give him up when his father returns. What if that father come

back between this hour and morning? The child may be missing when you call."

"Then you think we should watch during the night?"

"Exactly."

"I feared as much. My stories perplexed him and aroused his suspicions. If he has my child, he will try to keep him. That he may do by hiding or taking him to another house."

The three men watched the home of Mr. Nu until midnight, and were rewarded. A sedan chair was brought to the door at that hour, and a moment after a woman entered, carrying a closely wrapped child in her arms, and was speedily but quietly borne away.

"Follow at a distance," spoke Mr. Ban, "and I will, by a shorter route, be ready to meet them when they reach the house they seek."

In a village about half a mile away the sedan stopped at a house near which Mr. Ban was already in hiding. The woman hurried in with the child, and a few minutes later a woman returned with a similar burden, and was speedily carried back to Mr. Nu's home. Immediately after she disappeared in the house with the child, the bearers bore away the empty sedan and the work was done.

"He is smooth of hand and foot as well as of tongue," said Mr. Lin as he and his two companions

walked leisurely back from the village to Mr. Ban's home. "But he may find that others know as much as he. He has proven beyond question that he has my child."

"And you will not forget that it was my warning that led you to make this discovery," spoke Mr. Ban.

The next morning Mr. Lin and Mr. Lai were warmly welcomed by Mr. Nu. Refreshments were brought, every courtesy shown, and the two treated like princes. Said Mr. Nu:—

"When you wish to see him, the child shall be brought out. I hope he will prove the one you seek, for then we shall accept the offer and adopt him at once. We have learned to love him as our own."

As soon as he saw the child, Mr. Lin said that it was not the one he was seeking. Then he asked:—

"Is this the child that your daughter brought from Amoy?"

"Certainly," was the reply. "He is the one we have called her adopted son. Indeed, he loves her as if she were his mother. Poor child! he has none beside. If you wish to assure yourself that he loves her, I will call my daughter, since we regard you now as a valued friend."

The woman was summoned, and the child, by greeting her affectionately and calling her mother, showed even more than Mr. Nu had said.

“ And this is your daughter ? ” asked Mr. Lin.

“ Certainly,” was the answer.

“ And this is the child you brought from Amoy ? ” he asked of the woman.

“ It is,” answered she.

“ As I supposed,” said the boatman, “ it is not the child I seek. I beg ten thousand pardons for giving so much trouble.”

After many compliments the two men returned to Mr. Ban’s house, and then started with their host to find Tee Siek. Taking another than the direction to the village until some distance away, and changing later, they approached the house whither Tee Siek had, as they supposed, been carried the previous night.

“ You would better remain without, but ready to help if needed,” said the boatman to Mr. Ban.

Then, accompanied by Mr. Lai, he gained admission ; and, while talking to the man who admitted them, watched and listened for his child. A voice that he could not mistake was heard, and the little one came into the room.

Tee Siek stood face to face with his father ! Running away from Mrs. May, who was about to shut him in a close room, the child suddenly found himself in the presence of strange men. Seeing two strangers he stopped, dropped his head, and was silent. A

moment later he looked up, stepped back, and cast a startled glance at his father, as if uncertain who it was and what he should do.

Mr. Lin was nearly as startled as Tee Siek. The sudden appearance of his son seemed to root the father to the floor. With eyes fixed on the little fellow, the boatman seemed a statue with a soul. The silence was short. The parent broke it with the cry:

“Tee Siek! Tee Siek! Have you forgotten your father?”

The child’s face changed, his form trembled, his eyes shone; then he sprang forward, shouting as he threw his arms toward his parent, and was folded in his father’s arms:—

“My father! My father! He is not dead! He is not dead!”

The man who had admitted the two looked on in amazement. Mrs. May, who had heard the strange voice answered by the happy cry of the child, hurried forward to find Tee Siek in a stranger’s arms, and his little head nestling against the stranger’s face.

It was useless to deny that the two were father and son; useless for the woman to assert that he had been hers for years. No one could dispute that the father had found his lost child.

Before the excitement ended, Mr. Nu, who had watched the movements of the strangers, and had

followed them at a distance, entered. He tried at once to claim the child as his own, but was met by the assertion of Mr. Lin, backed by Mr. Lai's testimony, that he had only a few minutes before declared that another was the child brought from Amoy, and that the woman at his own home was his daughter. Failing to get possession of Tee Siek, he threatened to have the boatman and his companion arrested for attempting to steal a child. When this threat failed he said that he would arouse his village to seize and imprison the strangers.

“Do you wish to have your daughter arrested for stealing this child?” asked the boatman calmly. “Here is a man from Amoy who knew my child as soon as he saw him at your home several days ago. If you give us a particle of trouble, the mandarins will see that you are arrested and punished for robbing me of my son. If you care to escape without further trouble, you will remain silent. That is your only way.”

“And do you mean to take away that child, whom for so many months we have fed and clothed, without as much as paying me a dollar for expenses and trouble? I did not steal him, nor did my daughter. But we have cared for him, and, as you see for yourself, have done it well. Surely you are not the man to repay our kindness in that way.”

The sudden change and cool impudence of the man were not without effect on the father. Rather than have trouble he paid Mr. Nu liberally, and then took the child away.

Mr. Lin lost no time on his homeward way. Again were chair bearers promised a reward for a quick journey. He declined to take another chair for his child, though his excuse, that it was needless expense, was not the real one. The father wished to feel that little form resting against his own, and to listen to that childish prattle again.

CHAPTER IX.

A CRUCIFIXION.

AFTER Tee Siek came back, his mother and grandmother took him to a temple to offer thanks and presents to the god for his safe return. At the temple two strange women noticed Mrs. Lin's jade earrings, and watched her closely. When she kneeled before the idol they came nearer, examined her ornaments, and whispered together about them.

As the Lins were leaving, the younger of the strangers asked :—

“ Will the worthy princess please tell where she bought those beautiful ornaments ? ”

“ They were given my son's father for valuable service rendered another in distress , ” was the answer.

This did not satisfy, and other questions were asked, with each the questioner becoming more and more excited. At last she said :—

“ Those earrings were worn by my husband's mother when she was laid in the grave beside his father . ”

The elder Mrs. Lin had listened to the questions and answers in silence until this was spoken ; then she took her daughter by the hand and said, “ Come

away; you must not speak to such women. Come, Tee Siek, we will go."

The women asked an old priest about the Lins after they had gone, and were told that they were excellent people, faithful to the gods, and greatly blessed because of their devotion to the temples.

Mrs. Lin spoke to her husband at night of the women, and added that she dared not wear the earrings in public again, lest dishonest people claim or robbers take them away.

"If I had never seen the man who gave them, we would all be better off," replied Mr. Lin. "I thought I was getting a large price for taking the stranger to the mainland, but it was the worst bargain I ever made. Not only did I lose many dollars by it, I lost my son, and came near losing everything else."

"Yes, and you would have lost all, had it not been for the goodness of the gods whom you neglected," said his mother.

To this Mr. Lin made no reply. If he thought further of the strangers, he supposed them jealous of his wife's ornaments. Breaking open graves and robbing the dead, though not unknown nor even uncommon, is regarded such a dreadful crime in China, and so terribly punished, that Mr. Lin did not associate the stranger who gave them, nor the earrings themselves, with the dead.

The next morning an officer called and told the boatman that he was wanted at the yamen. Thinking the mandarins had business for him, he gladly went along. To his amazement, he found a charge against him of breaking open graves and robbing dead bodies. He denied that he had ever committed such a deed, or even knew any one guilty of the crime.

“Probably it is a mistake; if so, you will be able to prove yourself innocent,” said the mandarin; “but for the present we must detain you.”

Though annoyed, the boatman believed the matter would soon be made right, so quietly allowed himself to be taken to prison. There he was visited by an under officer, who told him that if money were not paid to quiet the parties owning the robbed graves, trouble would follow.

“What have I to do with that?” asked Mr. Lin.

“You have the jade earrings, have you not?”

“I have earrings of jade; but what has that to do with it?”

“Where did you get them?”

The boatman told of the stranger taken to the mainland, and declared it impossible that such a respectable man should rob graves.

“Perhaps he got them from the thief.”

“Perhaps there are many like those I have.”

“What will you say if the relatives of the dead

prove that you have the ornaments taken from their bodies?"

"Then I will give back their property."

"What if they declare that you robbed the graves?"

"They must prove the charge."

"What if they do?"

"They cannot truthfully."

"Can you prove that you did not?"

Though the boatman saw trouble ahead, he saw as clearly that the mandarins wanted to get money from him, and he determined not to allow it.

After the officer reported the result of his visit to the prisoner, the mandarins summoned Mr. Lin for trial, on the charge of breaking open graves and robbing the dead.

The earrings were brought. Mr. Lin admitted that they were the ones he had given his wife, and then told how he got them. The relatives of the dead said the ornaments were the very same that had been buried with the body whose grave had been broken open. They testified, further, that the crime had been committed the night before the government recaptured the city; and others declared that the boatman had been seen on that very night, in company with three men, walking toward the graves.

Mr. Lin's case appeared worse and worse. He was compelled to admit that he went, on the night of the

robbery, in the direction of the graves ; yet he denied going near them, and told where he had gone, and what business took him and his companions there.

“ Bring those men to prove your story true,” said the mandarin.

The boatman replied that he could not, for two had been killed in the capture of the city, and the third had gone away, nor did relatives know what had become of him.

“ I do not doubt it,” replied the officer, “ but wonder at your staying. Did you think such a crime could long be hidden ? ”

In vain Mr. Lin denied that he had anything to do with or knew about the robbery. He was told that even his own story was against him. Unless he could bring witnesses who knew that he had not been near the graves, or could prove that others had robbed them, he must be held as guilty. Time was given, as much in the hope that he would pay money to the mandarins as that he would be able to prove himself innocent.

Instead of seeking witnesses, Mr. Lin urged his friends to take presents to the Tong Wan Tautai to gain his influence. Unfortunately for the boatman, his friend had gone and a new man was there. He, however, accepted the presents and sent an officer to Amoy to examine the case. The report carried back was anything but favorable to the boatman.

Since there had been an appeal to the higher officer, and Mr. Lin denied the robbery most earnestly, the Amoy mandarins feared to condemn and execute the accused, lest his friends appeal to yet higher authorities. But if the boatman could be forced to confess his guilt, then there would be nothing to fear. They might condemn and execute him, or, if they saw sufficient reason to hide his confession, might set him free.

Chinese boast that the guilty only are punished. To make this boast seem true they try, by torture, to compel the accused to confess. Many, rather than endure the horrible sufferings, finally own themselves guilty of crimes they never committed.

The palms of Mr. Lin's hands were joined, a ring was slipped over the middle fingers, then a stick was placed between the hands, and by that he was raised until his toes barely touched the ground. Thus he was left to stand for an hour, yet told that as soon as he owned himself guilty he should be released. The next day he was tortured in the same way, only for a longer time. The next still longer. Since he refused to confess, refused to promise any money, his torture was increased each day, and later there was added a beating on his bare back.

Mr. Lin had in him what many Chinese have — martyr material. He could suffer and even die by

torture, but he would not own himself guilty of a crime that he abhorred. Beside, he determined not to pay the mandarins money.

That the officers would have tortured the boatman to death is likely, had not something prevented.

During the time of torture a young man called on a friend of the boatman and asked how much would be given for his release.

“A large sum will be given for the discovery of the robbers, or the man who gave him the earrings,” was the answer.

“I can do neither, but I will save him if enough money be paid for it.”

“How can you save him?”

“By taking his place.”

“How will you take his place?”

“I will confess that I robbed the graves.”

“Did you rob them?”

“No; nor do I know who did. What does that matter? The mandarins want a victim. I will give myself for a thousand dollars.”

“That is too much. He can’t pay it, nor can his friends.”

“What will they pay?”

“What is a fair price?”

“I am ready to make a bargain. Misfortune has robbed me of all my property; my father and mother,

depending on me, are old; my health is poor, and doubtless I must die before they do, so I wish to provide for them in old age. If able to do that, it matters little how soon I die."

"They will not need a thousand, nor even half that sum, to support them. One hundred dollars at interest will give them from fifteen to twenty dollars a year, and three hundred will support them well. You are not likely to live many years, so cannot earn one fourth, if even one tenth, of a thousand dollars before disease entirely unfits you for work. If you will confess that you broke open and robbed those graves, I will pay you one hundred and fifty dollars, and then use my influence with the mandarins to save your life."

After bargaining a long while the two came to an agreement. The young man, for two hundred and fifty dollars, would declare that he had, without Mr. Lin's help or knowledge, committed the crime and would take all the consequences.

The friend hastened to carry the news to Mr. Lin and got his sanction to the bargain. Before night the boatman was free and the young man a prisoner in his stead. The money was paid to the parents and the son left to suffer for a crime he had never committed.

Two days later the poor fellow was taken to the Amoy execution ground, fastened to a cross, sus-

pended, and left there to die. Multitudes came to witness the dreadful scene, and remained for hours looking at the sufferings of the supposed criminal. Some pitied, others treated with contempt, more rejoiced that such a wretch had at last been discovered and punished. These mocked at his sufferings, denounced his evil deeds, and declared that he deserved all he endured.

At first the victim was silent; but the torture grew until it was beyond endurance; the groans could no longer be suppressed; they changed to cries of agony. Now he begged for water, again for pity, mercy. He denied that he was guilty of a crime, and declared that he was suffering to save another from death. When the anguish, caused by pain and the taunts of the crowd, overwhelmed him, he begged friends near to give him poison, to pierce him with a spear or shoot him, and thus end his misery.

Near the cross stood the venerable parents, now gazing with tenderest love on the face of their son, again turning looks of hate at the careless multitude. One minute the mother spoke in gentle tones to the sufferer, the next she denounced the crowd for their heartlessness. She declared her son innocent, and far nobler and more loving than any of the mockers, and said that the gods were looking at him with love and would never forget his devotion to his parents. The

father was too sad to speak ; his looks told of the sorrow, and his tender touch, as his hands gently rubbed the feet of his crucified son, showed a father's affection and grief.

All day the changing crowd mocked at a distance, or standing near, gazed in silence at the miserable being dying so slowly on the cross. Their hearts must have been like stone, their natures savage, if near at hand they could have looked unmoved upon the face of the wretched sufferer.

The crowd lessened as night approached, and with darkness only two watchers remained by the cross. The cries of anguish had ceased ; the groans, lower and lower, indicated that nature was exhausted, and the sensibilities were becoming benumbed. The low appeal for water had been answered, as the aged father had raised by a staff a cup of water to the sufferer's lips. Though the cooling draught did not satisfy, it moistened the lips, and the parents felt that they were doing something to lessen the sufferings of their child. Nor did the efforts of the watchers cease with that sad service. The mother's hands bathed in water the feet and lower limbs of the victim, as she tried to soothe him with words of loving tenderness. She told him softly that the end would soon come ; darkness was hiding all, and neither friend nor foe was near to behold.

When night had fully asserted itself and none were near but the sorrowing parents, nor voice was heard telling that even in the distance human beings were watching, then another draught than of water was raised to the lips of the sufferer. A change came speedily now. The groaning lessened rapidly, and speedily ceased. Resting their wearied bodies against the wood, touching, as if it were sacred, the form of their son with gentle finger, or pressing their lips to the feet of their boy, the parents waited for the end. When morning came two watchers sat at the foot of the cross, and looked with loving gaze at the calm features of their dead child.

Permitted to take it away, the aged pair almost worshiped, as though containing the spirit of a god, the body of their son. To them he was more than a hero, he was a savior; had died to save his parents from poverty and want; had purchased comforts and luxuries for their last years with his own life.

Though we may not call such filial devotion heroism, there exists in the Chinese soul the material that heroes are made of. The Chinese can suffer and they can die for those whom they love; they can die like martyrs for a cause in which they believe, and to which they have devoted their lives. Arouse the better qualities latent in a Chinese soul, and you will discover one of God's nobility.

CHAPTER X.

FESTIVALS.

AS he grew into boyhood Tee Siek became a favorite and leader among his companions. He had more money than most of them, and was ready to share it with all. A brave lad, he won them by his courage, and showed himself ready to take the most dangerous place in sports.

Chinese boys, however, seldom engage in dangerous sports, or even such as call for vigorous exercise. Their games, except battledoor and shuttlecock and top spinning, are quite unlike those played by the Western youth, and show the natural tendency of the Chinese mind.

Racing and wrestling are rare, football and even baseball unknown. If such games become popular in China, they must be played by foreigners, while natives sit and watch and bet on the game. The people believe that real sport and vigorous exercise are foes. With few exceptions their pleasures are as suitable to weaklings and invalids as to athletes.

Shuttlecock and top spinning are played so like similar games in America that the differences need only a few words regarding the first, none for the

second. Instead of a battledoor, boys able to afford a pair, use their shoes. If barefooted the foot itself is used, and if the player can strike the shuttlecock with the sole of his foot turned upward he is counted as an exceptionally good player.

School days began with Tee Siek before many years of boyhood had passed ; after that he had little leisure for sport or excursion until after school or on holidays. He had not been a student many months before he regarded holidays among China's greatest blessings.

The New Year, for about ten or twelve days, is counted holiday time ; after that the second day of the second month, third day of the third, fourth of the fourth, fifth of the fifth month, and thus on, are more or less days of leisure and festivity.

These days were spent by Tee Siek, as by other youth and men of leisure, in wandering about, sailing, excursions to Kolongsu or elsewhere in the country, visiting temples to see theatrical plays, oftener to share in gambling going on in seclusion there, and not least in eating, drinking, and games of chance.

Theatrical performances are given by wealthy men in honor of the gods, or for the benefit of friends, and are always free. Crowds attend and remain until long after midnight, returning again the next day, if the play, as often happens, is not completed in a single day.

Very popular among boys is cricket fighting on holidays. And he who can have for sale a multitude of these little creatures is sure of an empty cage and full pockets before night of a chief holiday. Boys purchase and match the crickets, betting on the fight before or during its progress. This, however, is only one of many species of gambling. Nothing fascinates a Chinaman like a game of chance. Were missionaries to preach that heaven is a great gambling hall, China might accept the doctrine and become Christian in a decade.

China formerly had more leisure than now to observe holidays. Poverty compels work and makes the people poorer by its compulsion. The festival that in former years occupied several days, is celebrated in one now; and many work during the forenoon, devoting only half the day to recreation and pleasure. Unless something enable that people to enjoy more rest and recreation, the Middle Kingdom's future is a gloomy one. Even apart from its religious value, the Sabbath would be a boon of inestimable worth there.

Several, if not all, of the festivals have a history, and old people love to tell the story to children. Probably there is truth in some, perhaps all, of the stories, though several seem to have been made to explain the festival.

“Grandmother, please tell again that story of the Dragon-boats Festival and Wuh Yuen,” said Tee Siek, on the evening of the fourth day of the fifth month.

“Ages ago,” began the old lady, “there lived a noble man named Wuh Yuen in the Middle Kingdom. He saw that the mandarins were careless, some very bad, and bringing the nation into difficulty. He warned the emperor, and urged him to remove the bad men from office, and compel the others to attend to the business of the government. The emperor did not believe the good man, so refused to follow his advice. Wuh Yuen persisted, and gave more and more proof that he was right, yet in vain. The emperor was under the influence of the bad men, and believed their words rather than those of the good officer. Wuh Yuen loved his country so dearly that he could not allow it to suffer, if possible to prevent; and he begged the emperor to listen to reports from all over the empire, proving that already the evil feared by the good man had begun. Promising to consider the matter when he had more leisure, the emperor dismissed the good mandarin and turned to his pleasures. Seeing no change, Wuh Yuen visited the palace again and begged more earnestly than ever that the ruler would take time to study the affairs of the nation rather than devote all to pleasure. He declared that ruin was coming; and unless something

were done speedily, it would be too late to prevent. This made the emperor angry, and he ordered the officer to leave his presence and never come back. To make sure that he would not return, Wuh Yuen was removed from office and reduced to the rank of one of the common people.

“ The heart of the noble man was almost broken. He told his friends that unless the emperor was compelled to attend to the affairs of the government speedily, the nation would be ruined. Since his appeals while living were vain, possibly his death would have effect. Then he disappeared, nor did any know what had become of him, though all believed that he had drowned himself.

“ When the people who loved the good man learned of his disappearance, they hurried out to the water and searched everywhere, but in vain, for his body. Then the emperor saw, by the grief of the people, how much the good man was loved and trusted; and he began to think of the words of the dead mandarin. From the words he turned to the warnings and dangers, and then he saw that the warning was just, the danger great, ruin near. He saw that the faithful officer was right, and the overthrow of the empire was coming. Though too late to prevent all foretold by Wuh Yuen, the emperor dismissed the bad mandarins and made great changes in the

government; and so prevented the worst evils that were coming.

“Wuh Yuen died on the fifth day of the fifth month, and ever since, on that day, those living near any water gather in crowds and hurry this way and that in dragon boats, as if searching for the body of the good man. Thus the Middle Kingdom keeps from forgetting one of the best men who ever lived in it.

“When you grow up you will join in the celebration, and must try to think of the noble man whose memory is so greatly honored. Some day I hope my grandson will be, if not as great and good as he, yet a worthy man and a noble mandarin. Remember that you should try to be good, great, wise, and rich, and thus have multitudes remember and mourn for you when in the spirit world.”

Such stories had their effect on the boy. He resolved to become wise, and thus make sure of greatness and wealth.

On the morning of the fifth day of the fifth month, Mr. Lin took his son to see the dragon boats that were getting ready for the race. The men to sail them were not yet present, and father and son were at liberty to examine and ask as many questions as they would of the captain in charge.

The vessels were long, narrow, and without ornament or seat, except for steersman and director; one

at the stern, the other at the bow. About forty paddles lay on the bottom, ready for use, and on the bottom the men to use them were expected to sit. Some boats had been newly painted, others had the paint touched up a little, but many showed more effect of the weather than the painter's brush. Each was neat and clean, proving that its owner or commander had some pride in his vessel. These are called dragon boats, because supposed to resemble that mythical creature, and because each had a dragon's head carved or painted on the bow. Some — the most complete vessels — had such a carved head rising several feet above the bow on a dragon's neck.

Crowds that had been growing larger and larger from early in the morning almost covered the shore on the Amoy side, and even thronged along the edge of Kolongsu. These were waiting impatiently an hour after noon for the appearance of the dragon boats. The water of the harbor then was dotted with vessels of all sizes, each loaded with eager spectators anxious to see the race. Among these were Mr. Liu and his friends in his best boat, accompanied by Tee Siek. The lad was all eyes and ears now, though his tongue was not entirely silent.

“There they come!” shouted a voice. And a dragon boat with its forty or more paddlers, moving leisurely along, appeared. Soon another and another

came. In a few minutes a number of these long vessels waited at the upper end of the harbor for the race to begin. All were not of the same length or pattern, though more or less resembling each other. An hour passed; all became restless; then the order was given and the boats started. Side by side for a few moments; then separation and shouting. Excited people, wild steersmen, mad directors yelled to each boatman to strike his paddle deeper, to put forth more strength, to prove that he was a waterman, not a farmer digging in the ground. The paddlers yelled at each other to do better work, use more strength, and prove themselves fit to remain in, rather than be tumbled overboard. Spectators shouted from neighboring vessels to favorite racers, bidding the men do more and prove themselves winners; or told that they were gaining and would surely win if a little more exertion were used. From the shore came shouts in wild confusion, though an occasional voice arose above the tumult and cheered on the leaders or mocked those falling behind.

The separation between the boats grew, and the excitement of paddlers and spectators grew also. An excited Chinese crowd is never silent. Noise is Chinese. Excited paddlers rocked their vessels and compelled them to fall behind, while cool-headed men forced their own to the front. After one had for a

few minutes led the others it was declared winner and the race ended.

There was neither stake boat nor limit to the course. The question was settled as soon as a vessel proved its ability to lead its fellows for a few hundred yards, and it was cheered as victor. No prize was offered, no reward given. It was little more than a spurt of speed, each showing what it could do.

After the chief contest other lesser ones followed, but with less excitement and only a few vessels to share in the struggle. As soon as a boat found itself dropping behind, it turned from the course and acted as though it had neither tried nor cared to share in the test of speed.

The whole was merely a series of speed spurts, shared in by all who chose, left by each as they preferred. Yet the beginning of the first contest showed enough excitement to compare it with a real boat race for a prize and according to regular rules.

As the sun drew near the horizon the long boats turned shoreward, and one by one they were hauled up and left until the next year. A few hours of service annually seems a small mission, yet they form an object lesson worth all it costs. Wuh Yuen's memory, his faithfulness to his country, his lesson for rulers are thus kept before officers and people. Though little effect is apparent, it may well be asked what

China would be had she not some such lessons to prevent worse unfaithfulness than now curses the government.

The Dragon Boat Festival left a deep impression on Tee Sick's mind; and that of kite-flying on the ninth day of the ninth month made another almost as permanent and suggestive. His grandmother told him the following as the story of this latter. The story is condensed, however.

Many years ago a prophet told a good man that enemies had determined to kill his cattle and all other domestic animals, his family and himself; and his only way of escape was to take all to the hills on the day of the visit of foes. Without telling the reason or showing alarm, the good man led his family, and every living being willing to follow, to the hills. To pass time pleasantly he carried playthings for the girls and kites for the boys.

The watchful gods saw his real character; how thoughtful he was of children, and how careful to hide his fears; so to show their sympathy for him they guarded his home and protected his property from harm, though unable to save the animals from death. Returning at night the good man found that though some animals were dead nothing else had been disturbed.

After that the gods showed him great favor, and

allowed no enemy to kill anything on his land ; besides, they gave him great riches and honor and made him one of the noble men of the empire.

Ever since parents who care for the sports of children are careful to give the ninth day of the ninth month to the pleasures of the young. Men able to leave business spend the day in the country with children and share in their sports, not least of which is kite-flying.

Before this day came Mr. Lin made his son a present of a beautiful kite, and bade him tell nobody about it nor even try it until the morning of the festival. This was more than the boy could obey. Tee Siek told one friend and he told another, so news of the beautiful kite spread among his acquaintances until nearly every boy who knew Tee Siek knew that he had the best kite in Amoy shut up for the ninth day. The boys asked to see, urged their friend to try, and finally persuaded him to fly the beautiful present.

Tee Siek could wait no longer than the afternoon of the seventh day. Then quietly taking the treasure, without letting any of the family know, he started for the hills back of Amoy, followed by a host of boys. Other kites were in the air, and their owners dared Tee Siek to send up his to fight theirs. When he refused they offered to trade, and even to give him two kites for his one. Neither challenge to battle nor

to trade moved the owner of the beautiful flyer; and Tee Siek was about showing how well it could rise when a large boy came with a homely kite and dared the boatman's son to fight kites with him.

"Mine is a flying not fighting kite," was the response.

"Mine has never fought, so may not be as good as yours in a battle. But I will fight with you, and the kite which fails shall belong to him who owns the others," said the larger boy.

Tee Siek refused, but was willing to see which could fly the higher. This, however, would not do. At last the smaller lad said:—

"Your kite is strong, mine is not. In a battle yours would break mine, then what would it be good for? But a race can hurt neither. I'll try you flying a race."

"I will do it if each holds the string of the other's kite," replied the larger boy.

Tee Siek agreed to this and both kites went up, that belonging to the boatman's son rising far higher than the other. But it did not stay there. He who held the string pulled it down until near his own, and then in their pitching this way and that the kites came together and were entangled.

"A fight! a fight!" shouted the boys, all but the owner of the beautiful one delighted to see the battle up in the air.

It was too late for Tee Siek to bid the other keep the kites apart, useless to try to separate them in the air. Nor did the two remain long battling above the hills. Helplessly tangled, they plunged swiftly to the ground, and struck with such force that Tee Siek's was broken so badly that it seemed ruined.

The author of this damage looked on with pleasure, and declared that, since his kite was hardly broken at all, it had won the fight and both belonged to him. Then he proposed to take them. Neither Tee Sick nor his friends would allow this; though not until they had engaged in a battle of words was the matter settled, the kites separated, and the boatman's son allowed to carry home his sadly damaged property.

“Don't cry about it,” said a faithful friend, noticing tears in Tee Siek's eyes, “your father will give you another for the ninth.”

“No, he will not. He forbade my taking it to-day; and he will be angry when he knows that it is broken.”

“What will you tell him when he finds it out?”

“I do not know yet. I must think of something.”

The boy had a story ready on his father's return at night from business. Said Tee Siek:—

“Father, my beautiful kite is broken. I do not know who did it, nor how it happened, unless a dog got into the room through an open door. It was broken when I came from school this afternoon.”

Mr. Lin examined and found that, though badly damaged, the kite could be repaired; and at once it was taken to a man who made it his business to do such work. And on the morning of the ninth the kite was repaired almost as good as new.

"Father, let us go to those hills where so few people are gathered," said Tee Sick as he and his father started with the kite on the morning of the great festival.

"Why do you wish to go there? Where the people are is the best place, and there most of the boys are gathered."

"I know, but in such a crowd, and more are going, we cannot move around as we wish. Let us go to that high hill back of the others. No one will trouble us there."

"I do not care to walk so far, nor to climb that hill. I wish to meet friends who promised to be in that crowd."

Before Tee Sick could warn the friends whom he met in the larger company to say nothing about the damage to the kite, several boys asked if it had been repaired, and if the damage done in the fight had been great. In vain the boy motioned them to be still. Mr. Lin heard the questions, and asked what was meant by the fight.

The secret was out; and Mr. Lin learned that his

son had disobeyed, and told him a lie to hide the result of that disobedience. With a stern look and harsher words, he rebuked the lad for disobeying and trying to deceive his father, but said nothing of the sin of lying.

Tee Siek hung his head in silence ; and the boys wondered that Mr. Lin did not strike his son. All were glad when the father stopped scolding and prepared to fly the kite. None were more enthusiastic than Tee Siek when it arose in the sky until it seemed a mere speck. He forgot the scolding, forgot that his kite had been broken, forgot that he had disobeyed, and probably hardly thought, from the first, of the lie he had told. Chinese do not think it wrong to lie, but disgraceful to have a lie found out.

Though Tee Siek's was the most beautiful kite, it was not as wonderful as many flying near it. Some were shaped like diamonds, others like stars, suns, moons, comets ; still others like birds, beasts, reptiles, fishes ; in fact nearly everything that could be imitated in kite form.

A hen and chickens appeared in the air, and not far away a great hawk ; in another place an eagle and a flock of smaller birds ; here might be seen a huge fish swimming in the air, and there a lizard creeping on nothing. An immense snake wriggled this way and that, and a centipede not far off kept him company ;

nor were the strange shapes the only curiosities. From some of the kites came sounds as peculiar as the appearance was wonderful. Kites whistled, hummed, squeaked, and moaned ; while others gave forth various sounds, called music by those who know little of what it music means.

After centuries, perhaps thousands of years, of practice the Chinese have become experts in kite manufacture. Though the Japanese may equal them, is quite certain that no other people can.

All day long Tee Siek and his father remained on the hills flying the kite, talking, laughing, and watching the sports of others, when they did not share in them. Traveling merchants had fruit, cakes, candies, and many other foods more substantial, to sell ; so none need go hungry, if he had a few cash with which to buy his dinner. Nor was the food a cold lunch ; a man need but order, and as quickly as the wandering restaurant keeper could start his fire and cook the dish desired, it was ready.

As the sun sank in the west, Tee Siek followed his father homeward, tired, happy, and thankful that a Kite-flying Festival belonged to China. Had he thought of foreigners, doubtless he would have pitied a people who never set apart a day each year for flying kites.

CHAPTER XI.

DOGS.

CHINESE peculiarities include birds and animals. Crows are partly white, robins black, and several species of birds easily learn to speak. Few animals in that strange land are more interesting yet less attractive than the cow and dog.

The zebu, or Brahmin cow, is common there; but the buffalo cow is more worthy a full description. Resembling an elephant in size, color, and ungainly shape, it seems to have been formed after the supply of beauty had been exhausted. The great rough horns, turned backward until they nearly rest on the neck, suggest that these are ornaments, not weapons; and ornaments only because the owner is such an ugly appearing creature. Gentle as a lamb, it is led by a rope fastened to a ring in its nose, and obeys its little boy or girl leader as faithfully as it would a giant. The people call this animal a "water cow," some a "water hog," not because of any resemblance to a milkman's pump, but on account of its fondness for water. When free, it seeks a pond or other body of water, and, if able during the warmer weather, lies submerged except its nose, and so saves itself a great

amount of work when flies and other insects are about. If water be wanting, mud suits as well. Perhaps the animal thus gained its mud color.

The street dog, however, if stories regarding him are true, is the genius and fool in the Chinese animal world. Though born pretty, his hard life makes him a homely brute before a year passes; and he continues to grow more and more ugly in looks while life lasts. Fortunately, for other reasons, too, he is not long-lived. His color in early days may be black or white, yellow or brown; in a year or two it changes to the standard—shaded dirt. His hair, that in youth gives him the appearance of a wolf or coyote, is sacrificed in battles, and scars appear instead. Peaceable by nature, he is born for war, and fights for his living. If he have a master, he learns the fact rather through kicks and blows than caresses and kindness. Owned or ownerless, he must find his own food or prove himself unworthy a place among the living. Of course some receive better treatment at the hands of masters; the description applies to the vast majority.

The dog of the street is not an unmixed evil, for he is the city scavenger. He never deserts his post unless driven away; never shirks his duty; never goes on a strike; always hungry, usually starving, he allows no food to waste, nothing eatable to decay. Without

him epidemics might be far more common than now ; yet his only reward comes in kicks and curses.

It is said, in some places, the writer has reason to believe with truth, that the street dogs have a government of their own, and each brute knows his place and keeps it. Certainly it was almost impossible to coax, very difficult to force, a dog beyond certain limits in the city of Amoy years ago. And woe to the dog out of his beat ! He must run, fight, or die ; occasionally one was compelled to do each in turn. If forced a few blocks from home the brutes, bold enough before, became cowardly, and made desperate efforts to return.

One day, under Tee Siek's leadership, the boys prepared for sport with the dogs of the street. While smaller groups drove the brutes through streets crossing a main one, and then kept guard to prevent their return, two larger companies started, one at the head, the other at the foot of the principal street, and drove all before them as they approached the middle. At each crossing the number of dogs increased ; so did the company of lads. By the time the last crossing was passed, two large bands of boys guarded the ends of the street, while in it a mass of snarling, snapping, whining, howling dogs were seeking in vain a chance to escape. Only by shouts and clubbing did the lads prevent the brutes forcing a way through the human walls pressing upon them.

When the two crowds of dogs came together, and there was no chance to get away, the fight began. The growls and howls, the yelps and cries of despair of the brutes, mingled with the shouts of delight and yells of excitement from the boys, made the street seem filled with unearthly beings engaged in a mad fight.

People whose houses were near the scene of battle had been warned to keep their doors shut; others approaching were urged to stay away from the fight, lest the dogs attack them; and the boys and brutes had for a time the battle to themselves. Even a stolid Chinaman is not proof against the attractions of a dog fight, and men pressed in upon the lads by and by to witness the contest.

The brutes, crowded close together, leaped over each other, if not forced to fight, in a desperate effort to get away. Some appeared about to leap upon the boys, and, by passing over the compact body, would escape. Tee Siek saw the danger and shouted:—

“Move back! Move back and give them room, or they will attack us!”

Room was given, and, urged on by shout and club, the creatures attacked each other; then the battle became general and more desperate than at first. If a dog crawled out of the fight, he was forced back by human power, if not seized by a more savage dog.

The fight went on; to the boys it was fun, to the dogs murder. Does a dog fight make a human being meaner and more brutal than a brute? The lads had no pity, showed no feeling. A limping, bleeding cur was forced back even after he crawled at the feet of the boys as if to plead for mercy.

If the lads were without mercy, the animals were not without sense. They seemed to realize that they were victims of others than their own kind. As if by common consent, they ceased the fight and turned toward their tormentors.

Tee Siek saw the danger, and with a shout of warning bade the two companies stand firm and beat back the dogs preparing to attack. His own company listened and obeyed; the other, frightened by the desperate appearance of the brutes, hesitated and then fell back and crowded against the walls, leaving a small opening. Several dogs saw their opportunity and made their escape. Others followed, and all would have passed through the gap had not the young commander shouted:—

“Close up! Stop them! Strike them! Don’t let any more get away!”

The command was obeyed and a considerable number remained. The dogs, less crowded, were less desperate; but if they hoped to avoid further battle they were disappointed, for comrades belonging to

that part of the street began to assert their rights, and again the struggle was on. If any declined to share in it, they were forced into battle by the clubs of tormentors.

Mercy now pleaded with the young commander, and he listened. The sight of limping, bruised, bleeding, maimed dogs, suffering that he and his might enjoy, aroused his sense of shame, and he determined to stop the cruel sport. He shouted:—

“We have had enough of this. We will let them go. Move apart and make an opening.”

Before the boys could obey the order, a larger lad in the other company replied that the fight might as well go on until some of the worthless brutes were killed. This suited other lads, and was echoed by men back of them. Tee Siek urged and pleaded in vain. The men declared that no better service could be done the city than the destruction of half the dogs in it. Though the young captain refused to order the renewal of the battle, and insisted that there had been enough cruelty, others determined to force on the fight that had almost ceased. They tried to compel the wretched brutes to renew the struggle; but there was no response.

The creatures seemed to gain sense as the boys lost it, and resolutely refused to fight, yet showed that they had not lost spirit by the way they snarled and

snapped at the clubs that struck them. The blows given exasperated the brutes, but turned their rage at the tormentors rather than at each other.

“ Make them fight ! All together ! Charge at them with clubs ! ” shouted the larger lad who had usurped the command. He was obeyed by nearly all, a few siding with Tee Siek holding back.

The dogs, as if moved by one will, turned on the boys, gnashed their teeth on the clubs, and leaped upon their tormentors.

The lads were surprised, frightened, and stupefied by this show of courage. Instead of continuing, or even holding their ground, they pressed back and showed their fear. Tee Siek saw the danger and shouted :—

“ Don’t give way now ! Stand firm or they will attack you ! Club them, and hit hard and swift, or you will see trouble ! Stop them ; then quietly open a way for them to go ! If you give a chance, they will pounce on and tear you in pieces now ! ”

The more resolute lads tried to obey, but the desperate dogs seized and held the clubs that fell, while others tried to seize the strikers. For a few moments it seemed that the brutes would overpower the boys. But several furious blows sent back the leaders howling and limping from the contest, and the boys were masters again.

“Stand firm and divide on the side away from the dogs; separate, each pressing to the wall until you give a space for them to pass through without harming you!” shouted Tee Siek to those about him.

The other company, noticing what Tee Siek’s command had produced, opened too; but first on the side of the dogs. The brutes, seeing the opening, rushed through, and, in their eagerness to escape and anger at the boys for hindering, sprang upon and bit several before the way to reach the street beyond was open.

At last the fight was over; the dogs had disappeared; and the boys were examining their wounds, talking of the battle, and congratulating themselves that they had not suffered more.

“It looked dark one time. I thought we would be torn in pieces by them,” said a lad, “had not the captain ordered us to stand firm and club them back. I never was so frightened in my life. See how they tore my clothing; and see that wound.”

“That is the last dog fight I’ll ever have anything to do with,” said another. “I thought I would never get out of it alive. I am not sure that I shall get out alive at last, anyway. See how my arm has been torn, and how they bit my leg.”

“See here,” spoke Tee Siek, showing his garments in rags, and bleeding wounds in arms, legs, and on his side.

“ You are hurt worse than any of us,” responded a lad. “ How did it happen? Why did not you stop us before?”

“ It will not do for a leader to keep out of difficulty or danger. I would have stopped long before I spoke, if I had thought you would listen. I felt mean to see those poor fellows compelled to fight,” was the answer. “ But we will all get well and let dogs alone afterward. So they have gained in the end, and we have learned a lesson.”

“ What will your father say when he sees how your garments are torn? What will you tell him?” asked a lad.

“ I will tell him that I fought a dog that was trying to kill a goat, and saved the goat but got hurt myself. What will you say, Tun?” asked Tee Siek.

“ I will say that I fought a dog who was trying to kill a beggar.”

“ And your father will punish you for not allowing the dog to make one less beggar in the city.”

“ Well, I wish we had let the dogs alone. The captain warned us that there is danger in it, and he did not wish to go into the sport. The next time he tries to hold back I mean to stand by him,” said a smaller lad. “ He knows more about dogs than I do.”

“ I ought to,” responded Tee Siek; “ I am older.”

“And you used to have two dogs of your own. What became of them?” asked a lad.

“Old Sai disappeared, and later one of father’s men saw his dried skin hanging up in a man’s yard. The dog was so fat, and the man hungry, I suppose. The other one died.”

“Did the man who ate Sai steal him?”

“I suppose so. It was in the great drouth when so many starved. I was sorry to lose Sai, but he was getting old, and he was of some use at last.”

“You kept him too well.”

“I suppose so.”

CHAPTER XII.

A STUDENT.

WHEN six years old, Tee Siek, standing at the door of his home, saw a man carrying along the street two deep but small baskets hung at either end of a pole on his shoulder. Before each house he stopped and called out, "Respect printed paper." If in a few moments no one appeared, he passed on and repeated his call at the next door.

"Grandmother, why does that man call out that way? What has he in those baskets?" asked the child.

"He belongs to a society formed to prevent printed and written paper being soiled or trampled on in the street. He picks up every scrap found, and gathers much more, as you see, at the houses. This paper is stored in a house owned by the society, and when a large quantity has been gathered, the members meet and burn it."

"Why do they burn what he gathers so carefully?"

"That paper contains great men's thoughts which should be treated with respect and reverence. They should never be touched by the feet nor even by dirty hands. Notice how people respect that man because of his business."

“ Do all treat him with such respect?”

“ Yes; unless they are ignorant, and know little more than brutes.”

“ Do foreigners, of whom you told me, respect printed paper?”

“ Not as we do. Outside barbarians” (a term often applied to foreigners) “ care more for gold and silver than they do for learning. One comes from the earth, the other from the minds of the great. One is found mingled with dirt and is degrading, the other worthy and exalting. Foreigners would sell everything for money, because they know not the full value of learning.”

“ Is not money good? Why do you so often say I must be rich when I grow up?”

“ Money is valuable, for we use it to purchase food and clothing. Those are meant for the body, however, while learning is for the mind, which is far more important than the body. Riches are worth getting, but never to be compared with learning and wisdom. Learning makes men great.”

“ Are you great, grandmother?”

“ No, I am only a woman. Women seldom learn to read in the Middle Kingdom. How can they become great?”

“ Why did you never learn to read? When I am old enough I will teach you.”

“ I am only a woman, and cannot learn.”

“ Do you wish you were a man?”

“ Yes.”

“ Why are you not a man?”

“ I suppose I was bad, and did not obey the gods in my last life, so they made me a woman in this. For that reason I serve them so faithfully now that I may be a man when I am born the next time. Perhaps, though, I was a dog or cow or horse, and was so good in the last life that I became a woman in this.”

“ If I serve the gods faithfully, what will I be in the next life? I am a boy now; will I be a man by and by?”

“ I do not know, unless you become the son of a rich and great man. But if you are not faithful to them in this life you may be a girl in the next, or only a horse or even a dog.”

“ I will serve the gods faithfully then, but I wish to learn to read too. When can I go to school? Lay Ton, who is only a little older than I, goes. Will not my father send me soon?”

“ Yes; as soon as he finds a good school.”

“ May I go where Lay Ton goes?”

“ No, you must have a better teacher. Ton means to be nothing but a boatman; you must become a man of learning.”

“My father is a boatman, why may not I be a boatman too?”

“Boatmen never become mandarins. Learned men do. Some day we hope you will become an officer of the government.”

A suitable school was found, and before Tee Siek reached the end of his seventh year he began his education. This, like others, was a private school, each pupil paying for his tuition. The teacher was counted among the best in Amoy, so charged accordingly. The price varied from a couple of dollars to as many tens a year, for each pupil, Tee Siek’s tuition being twelve dollars a year.

About sunrise, at the close of New Year festivities, Mr. Lin took his son to the school, which was in a small shed of a building back of a dwelling, and reached by a dirty alley. The teacher was already in his seat, and several boys at their desks. Leading his son up to the man of learning, Mr. Lin introduced Tee Siek, and then the boy, told before what to do, bowed reverently, spoke a few complimentary words, and laid a present before the teacher. After listening to flattering compliments Tee Siek turned to a tablet on the wall bearing the name of Confucius, China’s greatest teacher and philosopher, and bowed three times with his head between his knees, thus “worshiping,” as it is called, the memory of the most learned man of his

nation's history. This done he returned to the teacher and was shown a seat with other boys.

Before his seat was a desk on which lay a pointed hairbrush called a pen, two ink stones, paper, two pieces of ink, one red, the other black, and a tiny earthen pot filled with water. Except the desk and raised platform on which the teacher's chair stood, the room had little furniture other than stools and desks for the pupils.

After his son had found his seat Mr. Lin left, and school was called to order. The teacher spoke a few words to the boys, since this was the beginning of the school year, and then summoned the new scholars, one by one, to his desk. Tee Siek's turn came, and the boy went tremblingly forward.

"You will begin in the Three Character Classic," said the teacher after questioning the lad. Then reading over the first lesson, he bade the new scholar repeat it after him again and again, until he knew each character and its sound. "Now you will take your seat and study until able to repeat the whole lesson without looking at the book."

Already other boys were at their tasks, and Tee Siek began his. Each studied aloud, as though he thought shouting was study, and seemed eager to make as much noise as possible. This was fun at first to the young student, but when his throat became hoarse the fun disappeared.

While the pupils were shouting their studies the teacher, with head thrown back and eyes closed, sat in his armchair seemingly asleep. As long as the noise continued he dozed, but when a lull came he rapped on his desk and said there was very little studying. At once the buzz and roar were resumed, and the man of learning was content.

A boy who had completed his task approached the desk, handed the book to the teacher, turned his back, and, as if trying how rapidly he could recite, repeated what he had learned. This turning the back to the teacher is called "backing the book," and is intended to show that the scholar need not see either book or teacher when he recites his lesson.

Seeing several others "back the book," Tee Siek followed, and recited without a mistake. The teacher praised and told him that he must surely become learned and great some day, then gave him another task and sent him to his seat a proud, happy boy.

Chinese education is largely a matter of memory, and he who commits most and can repeat readily has the best education. It is astonishing how readily and how much the Chinese mind can commit to memory. The scholar can repeat book after book, and even tell the book, chapter, page, and very line of a quotation from the classic writings.

At ten o'clock came recess, and the boys went home

for breakfast. For more than three hours they had studied without a particle of food, and this during the short days of winter. In summer the school began earlier, and seldom did Tee Siek eat before beginning his studies for the day.

The Chinese believe that eating and study do not agree, and an empty stomach means a full head ; but a full stomach a poor student.

The lads left the schoolroom quietly, rather like old men than hungry boys. The student learns early in life that he must be quiet and dignified, and seldom forgets it.

At eleven o'clock the boys were back at their studies, which lasted until four. In summer the school was dismissed two hours earlier on account of the heat. But as school opened earlier in the morning, the study hours were nearly the same.

Tee Siek little thought, as he proudly recited his second lesson, what aches and pains he would suffer before he had learned three thousand of these strange characters. He would have been more discouraged still had he known how many thousands more he must know before he could be a learned man. Lest the young beginner lose heart at the start, his teacher cheered him by saying : —

“ Notice that while the many ten thousand characters differ, each has in it one of the two hundred

and fourteen radicals. By those you may find and study each character in the dictionary. Though you cannot remember more than a few thousand, the books you will study most are all written with those few thousand words."

Tee Siek had much to tell on his return from school at the close of the day. The teacher had said that if he studied hard he might become a mandarin, wear fine clothing, ride in a beautiful sedan, and have plenty of money. The boy told his grandmother in confidence that when he became a mandarin and did not use it himself, she might ride in his chair.

The young student began to write early in his school days. Instead of a pen he used the small pointed brush, and made ink as it was needed. He poured into the hollow place of the ink stone a little water; into that he dipped the stick of black ink, if black were used, and rubbed it over the stone. Then dipping the pen in water, and touching it to the film of ink, he was ready for writing. He was taught to hold the pen, as many do in other lands, between the first and second fingers, thus making the characters upright rather than slanting.

Most of his early school days were spent in learning to read, write, and in committing to memory the writings of the great men of other days. Later he studied arithmetic, geography, and history; yet

those were counted far less important studies. He never learned to spell, for Chinese writing is made up of characters or pictures composed of a greater or less number of marks, not letters. Probably in early history the language was picture writing; little remains of those pictures now.

Later the student was taught to write essays and poems, usually taking the sayings of noted men as subjects. Every Chinese student is expected to write poetry, no matter what nature has done for his mind. The people seem to think poets made not born, unless they suppose all are born poets.

Often the teacher spoke to his pupils on other subjects than the studies, and taught them many useful lessons. More than once he spoke about foreigners, and warned the boys against the power and evil influence of outside nations. Said he one day:—

“Remember that ours is the Middle Kingdom, not merely because it occupies the middle of the world, but is the best of all. Others are outer, and possess what we have rejected. Our nation has always had the most learned men of the world; and it has the longest and most worthy history. The past was the age of wisdom, and it must be your business and duty when you reach manhood to bring men back to that age of glory and might.”

“Do not foreigners have better ships than we?” asked Tee Siek.

“ Better to cross the water and rob weaker nations,” was the response. “ Ours is not a mission of war and robbery, but of peace and blessing.”

“ Yet foreigners possess far more riches than we,” persisted the youth.

“ True; and how do they gain them? By robbing and making war on other peaceful nations. Money is their god, and never did men worship more faithfully. Remove money, and foreigners would want to die. The great object of life gone, they would wonder what they were made for. Never allow money to become your master. It will make you the meanest of slaves; and at any time a thief may rob and leave you helpless and wretched, for your master will be missing while your fetters remain. You have nothing further to live for, nothing to enjoy, and nobody to care for you. Never allow your mind to become subject to your body. The mind is master, the body servant, though foreigners have changed the order and made themselves despised.”

Several months after school days began, the teacher said to Tee Siek:—

“ You are such a faithful student that we must give you another name. It is high time that you have a student name, and I have deliberated long, but finally have selected what will please as it must suit you. In future your name will be Thean Kheh.”

The lad was delighted. He had expected a new name long before, yet dared not ask the teacher. He felt well repaid for waiting, since such a worthy one had been chosen. The meaning, Heavenly Guest, was much to him, but the fact that he had now his student name and was a real scholar, known as such to old and young by this change, satisfied the boy. It proved that his teacher thought well of the pupil, and meant that he was likely to be more than an ordinary man.

The shrewd boatman saw something back of the complimentary name. It meant that the teacher was anxious to keep his pupil for the sake of the father's purse, for school bills were promptly paid and presents not begrudged.

The time of danger in childhood was past, the youth was old enough and able to care for himself now, so an honorable name carried with it few dangers. Surely it would stimulate the young student.

The Lins were pleased with the change, and though it required months of practice before Tee Siek was given up for Thean, the new name gradually gave place to the old. The whole was rarely used, yet an addition was applied to the first one after it became common, and the boy was called Theana. The termination *a* differs little from our *ie*, meaning little or beloved.

CHAPTER XIII.

VISITING THE COUNTRY.

THEAN, as we now call him, was a faithful student, and seldom absent from school. Each morning shortly after sunrise he left home, and with only an hour of intermission for breakfast, remained at his studies until two o'clock in summer, four in winter. Except an occasional holiday he studied on, day after day, from the beginning to the end of the school year; that is, from the middle of the first to the end of the twelfth month. He had no Saturday holiday, no Sabbath of rest. It is not strange that after eleven and a half months of diligent study he was tired and longed for vacation.

The Chinese divide time into days, months, and years, but have no weeks. Each day is like the one before and that to follow, without a seventh devoted to rest and worship. Centuries ago time was divided into weeks, if we may judge from an almanac published years ago at Amoy. The first of each seven days in this is marked by the character for the sun, so the day would be called Sunday. When that division was used, when lost, and why retained in that imperial almanac, the learned men seem unable to say.

For several years after beginning his studies the young student took plenty of exercise at the close of school, but later gave more thought to books, less to sports. The result was weakness, headache, and inability to do his best at study. He heard so much about learning, greatness, and wealth, that his ambition to gain them got the better of his judgment. Several years after student days began he came home at the close of school one autumn afternoon, and throwing himself down on a bench, said:—

“ I wish New Year had come and would last twelve months. I am too tired to study, too tired to sleep or rest. When I do sleep books seem always before me.”

“ You must stop and rest or you will become ill,” said Mr. Lin, who had come early from business.

“ He must not stop and rest,” spoke the grandmother decidedly. “ He is merely paying the price of learning. All great men suffered as he does, but they continued. Those who stopped failed to reach greatness. He must choose between greatness purchased at the price of suffering now, and worthlessness later gained by ease and idleness in youth.”

“ Better less greatness with health than ceaseless study that destroys strength and even life. Jewels may be purchased at too high a price,” responded Mr. Lin.

“ Grandmother must remember that weariness is a

foe to study. He who rests well studies better," said Thean.

"It is not that I fear rest, but giving up altogether," replied the grandmother. "If you stop once, you may never begin again."

"Day after to-morrow I go to the country on business, and he may go along and enjoy rest while he sees the country," suggested Mr. Lin.

The boatman had recently started a passenger boat between Amoy and a small town to the north, and wished to visit a village beyond to arrange for more business.

Early on the day of the trip father and son were on board, waiting for the turn of the tide. A strong northeast wind promised a rough passage, and few passengers appeared.

Amoy passenger boats are propelled by sails and oars, so depend on tide and wind; and, as the end of their up trip is in the river or at the head of the bay, they must start with rising water and return with the falling tide. Thus, at the beginning of flood tide, the harbor is full of small vessels setting out for their various destinations, and near the end of the ebb they return singly, in pairs, and by fleets.

As Chinese care more for low fares than good accommodations, these boats suit the patient people. If a Chinaman finds a place to smoke, talk, laugh,

and curl up for sleep, he is satisfied, providing that he reaches his destination ; just when does not matter. Women are not great travelers, and when they journey they crowd together and talk in low tones apart from the men. Yet elderly women occasionally are found sharing the company and conversation of the other sex.

Among the few passengers this morning were three women and several children huddled together near the mast. While the little ones remained silent, the women talked of the storm, and told dreadful stories of wrecks and destruction.

“ We will have some boatsick ” (Chinese for sea-sick) “ passengers,” said Thean, looking toward the group of women and children.

“ Are you afraid ? ” asked the father.

“ I have never seen a storm in which a boat could go that made me afraid,” was the answer. “ But I think the captain will be unable to hoist full sail to-day.”

The captain, however, hoisted all and started across the harbor on his first tack. The vessel leaned over dangerously far, plunged furiously through the water, and dashed the waves madly from her bow. The wind sent the spray in sheets over the terrified passengers, who clung to anything offering a hold and wished themselves ashore.

“Father, is it wise to carry so much sail?” asked Thean. “Those women and children are terribly frightened; and the boat leans over so that the water comes in on the lower side.”

“A little afraid yourself?” inquired Mr. Lin, smiling. Then he ordered the head of the vessel to the wind and the sail lowered.

To this the captain objected that, unless all sail possible were carried, they could not reach the head of the bay before the tide turned.

“It is more important that these people are not frightened, so that they never take passage again, than that they reach the town on time,” was the response.

“Why cannot boats be built to ride more easily on the waves?” asked Thean. “If this boat were longer, she would not pitch so, nor be as uncomfortable. Foreign vessels are longer and sail easier.”

The old captain gave the youth a look of contempt, but made no reply. Mr. Lin answered:—

“Did you ever see a duck, goose, or any other water bird with a long body? Water birds are the model of boats in the Middle Kingdom.”

“And fish the model of foreign vessels?” asked Thean.

“Yes; and, like them, fit only to be hidden under water; the deeper the better,” spoke the gruff captain.

“If I build boats, I will make them for the comfort of passengers. Foreign vessels are not all like fish, and they are comfortable,” spoke the boy.

The captain’s look said even more than his words as he replied:—

“Youth always reveals its ignorance when it attempts to criticise the work of wise men. Our fathers knew what is the best form for vessels, and built accordingly. He who changes the model will never sail on more than one, nor make two trips.”

Thean made no further comment, but asked himself if the wise men of the past discovered everything worth knowing.

The tedious rough voyage ended, but the tide had turned. Passengers and freight were hurried ashore as quickly as possible, lest the falling tide leave not enough water for getting away from the landing.

Thean watched the men while his father attended to business on shore; and before Mr. Lin returned, the boat had started, leaving the boy standing alone.

“We will go now,” said Mr. Lin. “As we have plenty of time we need not hurry. The village is only a few miles away. Walking will be good for us both and give us opportunity to enjoy whatever comes in our way.”

“Friends,” said a man overtaking them, “are you going to see them stone the devil at Chio Jim?”

“We do not mean to pass through Chio Jim,” answered Mr. Lin.

“Then you would better turn aside and see something that you may not behold again.”

Turning from their path, Mr. Lin and Thean reached the village named and found a crowd of men and boys chatting cheerfully on a plain not far from the town. Telling his son that it would be safer to keep away from the multitude, the father led the way to rising ground, and there the two became interested observers.

In a short time the people separated into two companies, moved a couple of hundred yards apart, and then began the business of the afternoon. A man stepped from his companions, picked up and threw a stone toward the other party. Another from that ran forward and flung the stone back. Two now from the first threw stones at the second party, to have the missiles hurled back immediately. More and more men joined from each side, until the contest became general, and what at first appeared sport became a real battle. As the excitement increased the men drew closer together, and stones that had fallen short of the mark missed no longer.

The fight, real, earnest, seemingly deadly, continued for several minutes. The two parties drew so near together that a straight line dividing could hardly

separate them. Stones were hurled back and forth with all the strength of those flinging them, and with a purpose to hit and wound those at whom they were aimed.

Men were struck, bruised, wounded, bleeding, unconscious, and perhaps dead. The wounded who could escape retired groaning, crying, and howling with pain. The unconscious and helpless were ignored by the combatants.

Suddenly the battle stopped, and a remarkable scene followed. Those who had fought as opponents joined in helping the wounded to their homes, in carrying tenderly away from the battle-ground the helpless, and in bending over the unconscious and seemingly dead. The wailing of helpers mingled with the cries of the helpless; while over the silent victims there was a chorus of cries of sorrow and shrieks of hopeless grief. Women who had remained away during the conflict wailed and shrieked in agony now over the unconscious forms on the ground.

While this distress seemed at its height Mr. Lin and Thean left for their destination; and on the way the father explained to his son the strange battle. In fewer words the author presents an explanation given him by Chinese in Chio Jim years ago, at the end of a similar fight. While it is probable that such conflicts occur in other parts of China, the writer never saw nor even heard of them elsewhere.

Chinese believe in the devil, in fact in many devils, and regard the chief as a bitter and ceaseless foe of man. His great purpose is to cause suffering and sorrow in the human family, though, according to their notion, he is willing to allow others to take the work from his hands, and is glad to be relieved if it be done thoroughly. Believing that they can deceive him and save themselves a great deal of suffering, the people in this way take up his business and inflict pain and suffering on each other. So they meet together and actually stone each other to save the devil the trouble.

They make the most of every pain and ache, bruise and wound, and pretend to be nearly killed by a trifling blow given in these combats. Friends make still more ado over the victims. Slight wounds are treated with the greatest care, sufferings are magnified, and over the unconscious, or those who seem to be, are uttered the lamentations for the dead.

There is, however, reality as well as pretense in the groan and wail. Many serious wounds are given. Some limp forms carried from the field are really unconscious, and it is not unusual that a victim never recovers, while more than one actually killed by a stone is carried from the field. The fight seen by the author had serious results; two or three were fatally wounded.

This strange farce of “Stoning the Devil,” as it is called by the people, is regarded by them as noble heroism. They believe they are doing wisely for themselves, far better for friends and relatives who otherwise might suffer terribly, perhaps perish, under the malignant power of the chief of tormentors.

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CHAPTER XIV.

A PRISONER.

APPROACHING the village, Mr. Lin was surprised to see the watch tower nearly filled with men. This meant trouble with neighbors, and probably an attack that very night. What should he do?

He had engaged to meet that afternoon the chief man of the village; business made it necessary to meet him soon, so if he did not attend to it then he must come back shortly after. And what excuse could he give for going away when within an eighth of a mile of the place? To own himself a coward or indifferent to the welfare of the village would be to lose its business. It was by no means certain that an attack would be made that night. Though that were probable, he might transact his business and get away before dark. Even if he did return to the water, he could not reach Amoy, but must wait for the boat the next day. After hesitation Mr. Lin and Thean passed the tower and entered the village.

The watch tower, built of stone, brick, or concrete, is from ten to twenty feet square, and about ten feet high. On the side toward the village it has an open door; on the other three sides, holes for watching and

shooting at the approaching foe. Built along the path leading to the home of the foe, it is occupied only in time of war, and not even then unless an immediate attack is feared. In former years these towers were common, but since the government has shown its power to keep order, village wars have lessened and towers are going to ruin. Here and there may be seen one in good repair, telling that an old trouble has not yet been settled.

Watched closely as they passed the tower, Mr. Lin and his son were watched more carefully when they entered the town. Though suspicion was less, curiosity increased when they asked for the chief of the village. Told that he was absent and would not return until night, the boatman said:—

“Then we will wait for him and walk around until he comes.”

Father and son were followed at a distance, but undisturbed, by two men.

“They take us for spies,” spoke Mr. Lin to Thean, “and were we to try to escape now they would arrest us.”

“Do you think there will be an attack to-night?” asked the youth.

“I cannot tell, nor is it likely that the people know. Surely they expect one, or those men would not be in the tower.”

“I hope there will be an attack, and that a real battle will follow. I have never seen a fight, and this will give me a chance.”

“You will see little of it should the attack be made at night. Yet you may learn more than you care to know about fighting before it is over, if the enemy comes.”

“Why?”

“We must share in the fight.”

“We? It is not our affair.”

“It must be, if we remain here. If we do not take the side of the people, they will be certain that we are spies, and may lock us up if they do not punish us. Should the battle go against them, they would make us suffer for their defeat.”

“I would rather fight than be arrested as a spy. Nor do I object to fighting. A boy can do something in battle.”

“Yet I do not care to have you take any risk. It is enough that I must share the affairs now of this people. In the end it will be better for me, for they will become my warm friends when they find me on their side in war.”

“Father, we can get away after dark, can we not?”

“Even if able to escape here we may run upon enemies watching near. No; it is best to share in the affairs of the village now. Had I supposed trouble

had broken out I would not have brought you along, even had I come."

"Perhaps I can help you."

"You might help more if away and safe."

Mr. Lin met the village chief at night and was told that the only business he could attend to then was the protection of the place. Said he:—

"We are almost certain that an attack will be made to-night. I have been away to get help from friends, and will get it to-morrow, not before. No doubt the foes will learn that and come after dark."

"What started the difficulty?" asked the boatman.

"The folly of one of our own people," answered the chief. "If men could keep their tongues quiet, they would save themselves and others great trouble. This man visited the home of enemies and boasted that we meant to punish them. They were angry and beat him. He told of the unkind treatment, and several visited the village at night and killed pigs, goats, and a cow, and let it be known who had done it and why. A few nights after, graves of our ancestors were broken open. Of course we could not pass over such a crime, and we sent a company to punish the ringleaders. They went when most of the people were away, and cut off the ears of two men. That happened two nights ago. Since our foes did not come last night we expect them now. I am glad that you

are here, for you can advise me. The men are excited and rash. They may force a fight at the worst time. The elders are already consulting in another room, and if you will share in our counsels we shall welcome you."

"With your permission my son will accompany me," said the boatman, following the chief.

"Do as you like; boys are of little account at such times."

"I have asked my friend to meet with us," spoke the leader, entering the room where the elders were earnestly discussing. "He knows about foreign ways of war and may advise us wisely."

"We do not care to try foreign but our own ways," responded an old man, "and shall be glad if he advise according to the best methods of resisting an attack."

"The little I can do and say will be like adding a drop to the ocean," replied Mr. Lin; "yet you are welcome to the drop."

"Father, tell them that the way to meet an enemy is to attack him in an unexpected way, and thus make useless his own plans, while you confuse him," whispered Thean.

"The time has not yet come for me to advise, my son," replied the boatman. "They forget that the enemy may go around and reach the village by a different route than the path."

“ My friend may be able to advise,” said the chief, turning to Mr. Lin after a prolonged dispute.

“ It seems necessary to have sentinels in other directions. Those in the tower will do their duty; but what if the attack be made on another side?” asked Mr. Lin.

“ We do not expect an attack from another village,” answered a man petulantly. “ We are at war with only one. And I insist that we lie in wait on either side of the path beyond the town and suddenly attack the foe when he comes.”

After earnest discussion several sentinels were stationed around the village and bidden, at the boatman’s suggestion, to lie on the ground and report the first appearance of the foe.

“ My son here is a student and has read much about war; he may give some information,” said Mr. Lin.

“ When the plans of wisdom fail we shall turn to youth,” replied an old man, giving the boy a look of contempt.

During the discussion messengers had come at different times from women in the village, requesting that their husbands come home from the tower. Now a man came from the tower itself and asked how long the men must remain there. Before an answer was given a sentinel hurried in and reported that he had

heard talking north of the village, and he suspected that the foe had come.

“This man has just arrived from the tower and reports that no foe has been seen yet or heard,” was the reply. “Go back and attend to your duty.”

“Wait; his report may be true,” sternly spoke the chief, who had consulted privately with Mr. Lin and listened to Thean’s suggestions. Then turning to the council, he continued: “The men in the tower must remain and keep watch until we give further orders. It is possible that the foe has come around and means to attack on the north side.”

In a few minutes another sentinel hurried in and reported that he had heard voices near, and, creeping closer, made sure that enemies were waiting there. Hardly had he told his story before another entered and told a similar one.

“Impossible!” spoke a young man. “How can it be that three companies have come?”

“It is possible that one has divided into three parts,” spoke Mr. Lin.

There could be little doubt later that the enemy had come, and waited just outside of the village to begin the attack. The members of the council who had opposed Mr. Lin’s advice, and despised Thean’s suggestions, showed more excitement but gave less advice now, and were more ready to listen. Mr. Lin spoke. Said he:—

“ Quite certainly the enemy waits until you sleep to attack.”

“ Sleep! As if we could sleep at such a time!” replied an old man.

“ He does not know that you expect him to-night. Because he does not, you may the more certainly defeat and drive him away. Probably he waits until after the moon rises. Before that you may prepare and carry out plans of meeting and overwhelming him,” said the boatman.

After long and varied deliberations a plan was determined on and carried into effect. While Mr. Lin and a party prepared to reach the watch tower, others got ready for a pretended celebration that would make the hidden foes believe their presence was not even suspected.

Men and boys, carrying lighted torches, beating gongs and drums, blowing horns and shouting as though observing some joyous festival, marched to the temple and continued the celebration there for an hour or two. Meanwhile the boatman and his party, ready to start on their errand, waited for instructions from the elders and the chief of the village. Again the leaders differed; again the chief assumed the authority and said:—

“ Each one must, in the best way possible, reach the tower, and wait there until the noise of the

celebration in the village ends. As soon after as seems wise, you will march out as quietly as possible and approach the foe, who, doubtless, is dozing in small companies around the village, and give us the signal. When you learn by our reply that we are ready, then begin your attack. We will do the same from within. Perhaps our wise friend and his learned son can add something to the instructions."

"Only this," responded Mr. Lin, "each man must go alone toward the tower, and crawl along the ground, lest his form be seen against the sky by the watching foe. If one be captured, he must not betray either the plan or his companions. We will soon release him, so he need not fear."

"But you all go one way, how can you keep apart?" asked an old man.

"The man who moves north until he passes the enemy may reach the tower as speedily and surely as he who starts directly for it," replied the boatman. "We know that foes partly, and I believe completely, surround us. Surely they will not leave clear the path between the village and the tower."

"Father, may I go with you?" asked Thean.

"It is too dangerous, my son. Stay here and help."

"If you can pass, why may not I? Let me be with you. If they come after me, I will growl like a dog, and they will let me alone."

“ Beware that they do not club you like a dog.”

“ They cannot see in the dark; and meanwhile I will crawl out of their reach.”

Thean urged so earnestly that Mr. Lin permitted him to go along.

The party passed out from the north side of the village, so as to avoid the light of the torches, and then separated, Thean only remaining by his father.

The boatman led the way, as the two crawled like moles along the ground. Growing bold, Thean crept alongside, then passed his father, intending to lead him, and so reach the tower first. Instead of stopping occasionally to listen, the boy moved on, and soon became separated from his parent. Alarmed, Thean stopped, listened, turned back, and then, failing to catch a sound of any moving being near, started anew and made directly for the tower. All went well for a considerable distance, and he believed himself safe. Suddenly he heard, directly in front, voices speaking softly. “ Enemies,” said he to himself; and he changed his course. So eager to escape from those he heard that he hardly thought of danger ahead, he came again upon not a group, but a solitary sentinel.

This man heard something and stopped to listen. He called in a low voice, and, receiving no answer, walked in the direction of the sound. He stopped a

few steps short of the silent boy and listened again. Probably he saw the dark form crouching on the ground and he spoke louder.

Thean responded with a growl, and started as fast as he could go on all fours. A moment later he heard a stone fall by his side. This he answered with a dog's yelp of pain; and, rising up, pretended to leap like a dog in haste, but his awkward movements were detected by the sentinel who had pursued a short distance.

The yelp aroused other men, who asked the sentinel what caused it. He replied that he had hit a dog with a stone. This satisfied them, and might have saved the boy had he been more careful.

In his eagerness to get away from one danger, Thean ran directly into another. He was so near another group, when he discovered the fact, that he had not time to turn and escape before he was seen and pursued. Even now he might have got away had his movements not attracted the notice of another man, who flung a stone at the supposed dog. The answering yelp was far more like the brute it imitated than the movements. The man gave chase; and, Thean rising to his feet to run, ran directly against the sentinel who had thrown the first stone.

The youth was made a prisoner and taken to a large company of watchers and questioned. He had little

time to prepare a story, but Chinese are seldom at loss for an explanation. Said the boy:—

“ My father and I came to the village on business, but were arrested and held as spies. As soon as we could we escaped and were hurrying away, hoping to pass through your line unnoticed. I hope you have not caught him, then he will soon return with mandarins and set me free.”

He gave satisfactory explanations for the celebration, though he said he knew very little of what was going on in the village, since he had been kept a prisoner most of the time. The men might have set him free, had news not reached them that another, trying to pass from the village, had been captured. Thean was told to describe his father’s appearance. The man who had brought the news of the capture of the other prisoner listened and asked several questions, then said:—

“ He does not tell the truth. Bind and keep him. He is a spy.”

That settled the boy’s case. His hands and feet were tied, and he was left on the ground as if a pig or dog.

A prisoner! Bound hand and foot and held the captive of strangers! This was a part of war that Thean did not expect.

CHAPTER XV.

FREE AGAIN.

WHEN he missed his son Mr. Lin waited and listened, hoping to hear him, but in vain. Thinking that the boy had hurried on to reach the tower first, the father started forward, listening intently as he went. The yelp of a dog, then another later, with excited voices told him that Thean was near, but discovered and pursued; then a prisoner.

The father's first impulse was to go to his son's rescue, but a second thought showed that such a course would be worse than useless, and that he could best help Thean by carrying out the plan made in the village.

The excitement caused by the capture of the youth enabled the boatman to pass the enemy the more easily, and he reached the tower among the first of his party. One after another the others came in, until only one man and Thean were missing.

"I hope they will not hold my son for a ransom," said Mr. Lin, who had not forgotten the experience of years ago.

"Never fear," replied another. "They will be fortunate if they get away with whole skins them-

selves. They will do no harm to him beyond leaving him bound hand and foot. We will find him thus when we drive them away."

"If it be possible, my boy will escape before. But they may not give him a chance," added Mr. Lin, gaining hope.

"They will hardly give him a chance, though they may not think it worth while to keep close watch of a boy."

"If any boy can outwit a body of men, he is the one. His teacher says that he is the shrewdest pupil he ever had, and that he is certain to become a noted man some day. He is a leader now of the boys. If they undertake anything unusual, I am certain that the plan is his own. He suggested to me and the chief the plan of attack to-night."

"He is surely a bright, smart lad," was the reply.

We turn now to Thean. Though bound hand and foot, his mind was free and active. He did not suppose himself in great danger, but thought of the disgrace that would follow his capture, if it became known at Amoy. His friends would never cease telling him about it. But if he could get away, and then report to those in the tower what he had heard, it would be as great an honor as his capture otherwise would be a disgrace.

While the men talked he listened and planned his

escape. He knew how readily a Chinaman sleeps when he has nothing to do, so felt sure that all except the solitary sentinel would slumber soundly for a couple of hours before the time arrived for the attack. If they would only sleep soon enough for him to escape and report their plans at the tower, he asked no more. He believed it possible to turn his feet so far backward that his hands, tied behind his back, could reach and loosen the knots. Yet, until the men slept, he dared not attempt to get free.

The men talked on, and laughed as they talked of the surprise awaiting the villagers after midnight. They spoke of people without feet carrying on their backs those without arms, and of earless men listening to the bleating of goats and squealing of pigs. They laughed almost aloud when one said that this night would end forever the difficulty between the villages, for the victims would never again dare to arouse the men waiting to punish them for their crimes.

Thean listened anxiously for the conversation to cease, and then thought that sleep might prove contagious, so began to snore. His good imitation deceived the men, and one said:—

“Listen to the snores of that pup. He does not take his captivity to heart. Let him sleep; he can do no harm, unless he snore loud enough to arouse the villagers. We may as well take a nap, too, before the

time comes." Saying this, one of the men was quiet, and a minute or two later asleep.

Others followed his example, and soon the whole company, except the sentinel, was slumbering. The lone watcher kept awake and intent on his duty for a time, but example was strong, and old habits stronger. Keeping guard was new business to him. Walking back and forth after a hard day's work in the field taxed his soldierly qualities beyond endurance. His companions slept; why should he resist longer the temptation to slumber for an hour or two? Nothing would suffer if he took a nap, and there would be no one to know if he awoke in time to arouse his fellows. Such arguments were stronger than his resisting power, and the sentinel sat down. A word tells the rest. He slept.

As soon as the sentinel followed his comrades, Thean became restless. His snoring continued, and his body tossed and tumbled, yet with each movement went farther from the captors. When far enough away he was silent, not still. His feet moved up backward until within reach of his hands, and then his fingers touched the knots. He was thankful now for skill in playing shuttlecock with the soles of his feet.

The knots were hard, his hands hampered by the cords fastening them, yet his fingers were free. The first knot yielded slowly, but it yielded, and the ends

of the cord slipped through. One knot loose ! The next yielded more readily, and two were untied ! Another, and then the last. The boy's feet were free. What did it matter that his hands were bound ? He did not need them for walking. If he could but reach the tower, those cords would speedily yield to the knife. The men near were asleep, and he might, by bending low, safely walk away.

Rising to his feet, Thean looked around for the tower. Where was it ? Darkness about him ! Nothing in the horizon appeared like the object of his search. The noise in the village had ceased, the lights were out, nothing remained to direct. He had lost his bearings while tossing and rolling along the ground, and did not know what direction to take. He could but guess the way and walk forward. While straining his eyes to see the tower, he stumbled and fell into a hole. Looking up he saw, as he supposed, what he was seeking, and near at hand. Gaining his feet, he walked toward it to find a tree. He changed his course and moved on, listening now and again for the voices of his father and companions. Instead of voices he heard footsteps, and following him. Changing again to escape what he believed was a pursuing foe, he ran as swiftly as possible, nor did he stop until assured that no one was on his path.

He remembered now that his feet in running had

touched solid ground, probably the path between village and tower, and he retraced his steps, feeling carefully the way. To his joy he reached the path. Doubtless it led to the village and to the tower, but which was the way to the latter? Walking along the path away from the village, he thought he heard, after traveling some distance, the sound of snoring. He was approaching a band of the enemy. Quietly but at once he retraced his steps. He knew the direction of the tower now, and in a couple of minutes heard voices, saw the dark outline of the square structure, and then was safe inside. In a low voice he called: —

“Father! ”

“It is my son! Thean, I am here. Come to me.”

A moment after father and son were together. And while one loosened the bands the other told what he had learned.

“Did any one go out from this place a short time ago?” asked Thean.

“Yes, I did,” replied a young man. “I went to see if the enemy was asleep, and hearing footsteps, supposed a sentinel heard me and was running back to his comrades.”

“And I ran away, supposing you to be one of the enemy pursuing me. You may be certain that they are all asleep.”

Thean’s report convinced the men that the time to

attack had come, and they prepared to leave the tower. Until now there had been a dispute about leadership. Those in the tower insisted that their chief should lead, and those who came from the village said that theirs should command.

“Since we cannot agree, why not allow our wise friend to lead us?” asked a man. “He knows more than any of us, and with his wise son’s help he surely will be able to lead us well.”

This satisfied both parties. Since there was little to do beyond leading and directing the men to do what had already been decided upon, the boatman willingly accepted the position, and, followed by his son, led the way out of the tower.

Silently and in single file the company approached as closely as was safe to the sleeping foe, and then separated to make as long a line as possible. While they waited a night bird’s cry was heard, and a moment later the bark of a dog answered from the village. The cry of the bird was repeated and answered again by the dog. For the third time the cry was given and responded to as before, but this time by a succession of short, sharp barks as if the dog had made a discovery, yet did not know what. The bird changed its cry now, and a moment later the still air was pierced by yells, screams, and shrieks, horrid enough to suggest that a regiment of demons had suddenly appeared

on earth. The first outbreak was followed by a moment of silence, and that by another series of yells more terrifying than the first. Added to it was another, more in volume if less frightful, from the village itself. Speedily the shrieks from outside the line of foes and answering howls from the village were echoed by cries of terror from the aroused sleepers. The combined sounds cannot be described. For several minutes this horrid uproar continued, lessening only when the frightened foemen were far on their homeward way.

Many, if not most, of the waiting foe were aroused from a sound sleep by the yells of the tower party. Hearing the shouts coming from another direction than the village, they supposed an armed force present to assist their enemies; between the two bodies there would be little chance for victory. Without stopping to consider consequences, each man, caring alone for himself, started homeward, yelling for mercy as he ran. The shouts of fellow fugitives, supposed to be those of pursuers, made the escaping men run the faster and beg the more for mercy.

When the terror of the foe became evident the tower party changed its terrifying shouts to those of vengeance. Men were heard in various parts of the field calling to their fellows to shoot, spear, and stab, and to let not even one escape. The fugitives were

told that not a man should reach his home alive. They had dared to make war; their opponents would make peace. That peace would never be broken, because there should not remain a man to disturb again.

After the foe was scattering, threats gave place to ridicule. Those without shouted to the flying people to take a few feet, hands, and ears along as trophies of victory and proof of valor. They were bidden to proclaim their courage and tell how boldly they had slept on the field, until aroused and driven away by more watchful opponents.

Mr. Lin's men, though separated, were only on the south side of the village, thus giving the fugitives opportunity to escape in all directions except that of their home. The villagers contented themselves with shouting. There was little pursuit, except that made by their frightened comrades.

The surprise had been complete, and the victory all that could be desired. There had been no fight whatever except of noise, nor had the victors cared to take prisoners. Content to send their opponents home in a state of hopeless terror, they sought to do no more.

Fifteen minutes after the first shout was heard the last cry of the fugitives had died away, and the villagers were rejoicing over their bloodless victory.

No one was hurt; all except the solitary captive were happy.

He was discovered, bound hand and foot, helpless on the field, where his captors had left him. Beyond his capture and the ridicule bestowed by his fellow townsmen, he too was unharmed.

Though every member of the tower company deemed himself a hero, Mr. Lin, and next him Thean, received the praise of the people. The story of the boy was told and retold, until the youth appeared a marvel in the eyes of the villagers.

Village warfare does not always end in a farce. Too often serious results follow, and bloody battles are not unknown. Prisoners are taken, men are wounded, combatants slain; and the trouble that might have been settled before the fight becomes the heritage of the children of those who engaged in it. Unless the mandarins interfere, the difficulty may break out at any time, yet may remain hidden for generations. Fortunately, a stronger hand in the general government has lessened in number and in seriousness these village wars.

Not until long after midnight did the excitement pass away sufficiently to allow the boatman and his weary son to retire. Even then Thean was too much excited to sleep. Near morning he sank into a restless slumber, awaking several hours later with a

distressing headache. He told his father that he could not move without intense pain, and begged to be allowed to remain in bed for a while longer.

“Lie still as long as you wish,” said the father; “we cannot leave until noon, and if you are able to go then, I will have you carried down to the water in a sedan chair. It is better that you remain quiet and away from the people, for they will only excite you by their talk. They regard you as the bravest and wisest lad they ever knew.”

The boy was able to rise before noon and to take a little food before starting. The ride to the water refreshed him, and the sail homeward made him feel better still, so that he was almost himself again when he landed on the Amoy jetty.

The chair bearers told the boatmen and passengers Thean’s exploit, and gave no small share of the credit for the bloodless victory of the previous night to the youth. Thus he was quite a hero on board the vessel, and even a greater one among his comrades when they learned his adventures in the country.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FISHERMAN.

THOUGH improved by his short rest, Thean did not feel the effects long. The old headaches and weariness returned, and the youth said that he could not continue his studies.

“But you must,” responded old Mrs. Lin. “It will not do to stop now. Remember that you are paying beforehand the price of learning, riches, honor, and power. Will you pay, and, when so near to the prize, refuse to take it?”

“But what will be the good of riches and honor, if my health fail and I die?” asked he.

“You will not die; you are young and your strength will not fail as soon as you suppose. Keep on, though you may study less. There is great danger that you will never begin again if you stop now. Better keep moving, though it be ever so slowly, than stop entirely. Great men suffered as you do to gain their honor. Pay the price now, get the honor later.”

“Father, if you will allow me, I will go on one of your boats for a few months,” said Thean shortly after this conversation with his grandmother. “Grandmother fears that I will stop entirely if I stop at

all; but there is no danger of that. I must rest now if I ever study any more."

Mr. Lin did not favor his son's plan nor wish him to stop his studies for a day. He had become as anxious as any for Thean's success as a literary man; yet even he saw that the youth was wearing out if not breaking down, and he promised to see what could be done. Shortly after he proposed that Thean spend a few months in a fishing boat on the ocean. He said that it would be better for him to be on the rough waters than in the smooth harbor, for the tossing of the waves would drive out far quicker any evil that had found a home in the student's body.

"Father, I would much rather be on yours than on the boat of a stranger. Beside, fishing boats are dirty, the men rough, and food poor. Yet, if you think best and grandmother allows, I will try it for a month," answered the boy.

Old Mrs. Lin objected, but finally yielded on condition that her grandson promise to begin his studies at once if sea life restored his health. The younger Mrs. Lin was scarcely consulted.

The captain of the boat on which Thean went was Mr. Lin's friend, but his crew were strangers to the youth, and displeased that such a delicate addition had been made to their number. They declared that he knew about neither boating nor fishing, and would be

a bother rather than help. For a few days they seemed to have guessed aright, but the quiet, pale youth speedily changed. His hands hardened, his face browned, his quiet ways disappeared, and he became one like themselves, except that he did not adopt their rough ways and bad language.

His dress, if better than theirs, was rough and coarse, his friendship hearty, his skill as a fisherman soon almost equal to their own, and his appetite for their poor food all that even fishermen could ask. Nor did the youth care to play gentleman while they did the work. He said that he came to share with them, and he meant to do it.

Old Mrs. Lin mourned to see her grandson become more and more a fisherman. She said that his hands would never again become soft and delicate, nor his skin pale as before the sun had tanned it, and that his student manners would be lost entirely before his health was restored. She bewailed the time lost, and lamented that his companions, once his inferiors, were rising far above to remain his superiors for life.

“I am paying now the price of hard study; they are reaping the advantages of leisure enjoyed when I was at work. I have learned that too great speed may mean slow progress,” said Thean, responding to his grandmother’s lament, when he was home one day while his boat was undergoing repairs, and the captain

selling the fish caught. "I am now doing more than paying a penalty, I am learning a lesson, and at the same time laying up a supply of strength for future work."

The youth had been a month with fishermen, and might have spent several months on the water had it not been for a shark that visited his own and neighboring boats, to the great annoyance of the crews. The creature was more than a thief. He not only stole fish from the lines and nets, he destroyed nets and carried away lines, until fishing became worse than useless.

The men were provoked and perplexed. They could not keep the shark away, they did not dare kill it. They, in common with Chinese fishermen elsewhere, believed that it brings bad luck to kill a shark; no matter what kind of luck his presence brings, it will not do to kill him.

For some time the thief seemed to prefer the boat in which Thean was, and his line to those of his companions. This made the fishermen say that the shark and the student were friends, and while one remained in the boat the other would be near.

Though the men said this in a joke, Thean was annoyed by it, and still more to lose so many fish, and to be compelled to get new hooks and lines so often. The youth studied ways for getting rid of the thief,

but failed to discover a suitable one, until he lost a large fish and line which he was pulling up for the last time, before starting for the shore with a supply of fish.

Reaching the shore Thean disappeared, nor did he return to his companions until the boat was ready to start again for the open sea. He carried a tightly covered and bound package under his arm, but refused to say what it contained. He placed it under his seat and refused to allow others to examine or even touch the wrapper. He said that all should know in time what he meant to do with the bundle.

The crew had caught a few fish before the shark arrived. The first fish stolen was from the captain's line. He was angry, and declared that if the shark did not leave they might as well give up fishing. By and by another man lost a fish, and line with it. Soon another, and then the captain again. He was very angry, and said that he wished some one would kill the rascal.

"If you will allow me to use a few fish, I will try to kill him," answered Thean.

The captain gave permission, yet said that he must pay for them if his experiment failed. But, if he drove the monster away, he might have all the fish he needed.

A little later Thean fastened a string to one of the

fish and dropped it overboard. That sank slowly; shortly after it disappeared there was a jerk, and Thean pulled up a broken string; nothing else. Ridiculed by his companions, he smiled, yet made no answer as he dropped a larger fish into the water, to pull in a few minutes later a broken string again. This he did four times, each time selecting a larger fish, and each time losing it. The thief became bold and hardly waited for the fourth to sink beyond sight before he snapped it from the cord. The men grumbled at the boy for wasting the fish, but Thean asked them to wait a little while and then see if they had been wasted.

The fifth was the largest fish in the boat, and when dropped over the side it presented a strange appearance. It had been cut, and something placed inside made it seem almost round. In the mouth was, not a string, but a wire, to which was fastened a small rope. This fish did not sink as readily as the others, nor did the shark wait for it to get under water. Rising to the surface, and giving a sudden turn, the great thief seized the fish and started off. But his teeth did not snap the wire; the rope fastened to it was tied to the boat, and that felt a sudden jerk. Then there was a slackening for a moment of the tension, as if something below had given way, and later the rope was more taut than before. It resisted

the strain for a moment only and broke. The fish and wire had been taken and a part of the rope was gone.

The men now ridiculed Thean more than ever. They asked how many more fish he meant to waste, and if he supposed it possible ever to give the shark all he would eat. They declared the monster hollow, and said that he would stretch and hold all the fish they gave.

Thean quietly watched the water; on his face was a look of earnest expectation, but no disappointment. He told them to wait and see if the shark came back for more fish. The fishermen turned their attention to the water, nor did they look long in vain. The monster arose to the surface, but seemed to take no interest in anything around him. He acted as if impelled by some frenzy, and as though he had forgotten about the boat and its fish. For a moment he swam furiously in one direction, and then, turning suddenly, swam as swiftly the other way. Soon he changed his course and made for the boat, as if determined to destroy that and its occupants. When near the vessel he disappeared, and a little later came out on the other side, swimming furiously. Suddenly he stopped and lay on the surface motionless. Again an impulse seized him, and he leaped into the air, to disappear beneath the water a moment after. He was

not gone long. Rising to the surface, he swam with fury toward the boat until near it, then, changing his course, swam as swiftly in another direction. He had not gone far before he stopped and lay still as if dead. Then plunging downward, he disappeared again, to rise in a short time near the boat. There he lay, turning, twisting, and writhing, as if in fearful agony; and then he started anew on the mad race, this time swimming in a large circle. His speed slackened, the circle became smaller, and then the monster lay still, except a quivering of his flesh and a slight movement of his tail. He seemed dying, but he died hard. When he appeared dead he suddenly revived, gave a tremendous leap into the air, and plunged beneath the surface. Gone for a few seconds, he reappeared and swam along the water with furious speed, then stopped, twisted, tossed this way and that, and ended by rolling over and over, slower and slower, until he was still and seemed certainly dead. But death had not ended his torture, for he revived and lashed the water with his head and tail, making it boil and rise in spray like steam. Gradually this motion lessened until there was stillness, except a quiver passing along the huge frame. That ceased too, and the struggles of the shark ended forever. He was dead.

Thean watched these struggles in silence, but his

eyes, fixed on the creature or watching for his appearance, and the smile of satisfaction on his face showed how intensely interested was the boy in the shark. Not a word was spoken in reply to the jeers, the exclamations, and the inquiries of his companions. He seemed to think of nothing but the monster dying on the water. When it was plain that the shark was dead, then he replied to the men:—

“Yes, he is dead; I thought that would kill him.”

A remarkable change had taken place in the fishermen during this death struggle of the creature. Thean was to them no longer a young student ignorant of everything but book learning, no longer a person to be ridiculed and reckoned as inferior to themselves in knowledge of fish and fishing. He was more than a mere boy, more than human; he had powers of which they knew nothing. If he was not favored by the gods, then demons were his friends, for he could not alone have killed that shark so quickly and without effort.

After that the men treated the boy with a respect that amounted to reverence. They seldom spoke to him, yet when they did it was in subdued voices and respectful, even polite, language; but they seemed ill at ease in his company. Occasionally they whispered together and to the captain, yet kept the subject from Thean.

The men found an excuse for returning to Amoy long before the regular time; and when the city was reached the captain told Mr. Lin that it would be unwise for his son to go out to sea again, lest all suffer for killing the shark. He added that for his own part he had no fear, but for Thean's sake it would be wise that the boy remain ashore.

"What possible harm can come to you or my son because of that shark?" asked the boatman. "You should feel thankful that the beast is dead."

"We do feel so, and are very grateful to your son for it. Yet because we respect and honor him, we fear to have him take the risk. Surely that shark has friends in the water, and they will take revenge on your son. That will bring his companions into trouble."

Mr. Lin, less superstitious, said that he did not believe there was much danger, yet if the captain feared to take Thean along again, he must remain ashore.

"Not for myself, but for my crew, am I speaking," replied the captain. "They refuse to go to sea with me again if he is along. They say that the friends of the shark, whoever they may be, will surely take revenge; and since your son is so wise, the revenge will be on his companions rather than on him, lest he cause them to suffer. I cannot let my

men go, and do not wish to miss your son, but must do one or the other. Apart from other considerations are his own interests. No doubt if he goes on the water, the friends of the shark will watch to be revenged; so my advice is that he remain on shore for a few months."

Though Mr. Lin ridiculed the idea of danger, his mother did not. When she learned of the death of the shark she said emphatically:—

“ Thean shall not return to the water. To go out in a small boat where he would be seen and his shadow fall on the water would be to risk if not lose his life. He did well to kill the shark, and now must avoid vengeance. It is well that he remain ashore, for he might become a fisherman for life if allowed to continue much longer. All his talk has been of the water and fishing.”

And so ended the fishing days of the young student. Nor was he sorry to be in better company and live in a house again, sheltered from storm and wet. Asked by his father how he killed the shark, Thean replied:

“ I prepared a number of bamboo splints, sharpened at each end and fastened in the middle like the splints of a basket. These I bent together at the ends and put a ring over to hold the points close to each other. The whole appeared like a large pineapple. At the bottom I fastened a thick wire and coiled several feet

of it inside the machine, and then fastened the wire to the ring. The wire was long enough to reach several feet beyond, for had I used a rope the shark would have bitten that. This machine I pressed inside the largest fish we had, and then, after baiting the shark with smaller fish fastened to a string, let the fish and machine overboard. By this time the shark was ready to swallow anything without examination, and he quickly gulped down what had been prepared for him. As before, he pulled away and expected no doubt to break loose, but the wire held, nor could he bite it. Then, as I expected he would, he pulled harder, and that pulled the ring off, releasing the sharpened splints. Those no doubt at once spread out and pierced in every direction as he jerked harder, and broke the rope. That last pull forced the sharp points into his stomach so deeply that death must follow. I did the preparation, and the splints did the rest. That is all of it."

It was a cruel death, but Chinese think little of pain and suffering caused to fish, fowl, and brutes. Mercy to human beings even is sadly lacking.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CABIN BOY.

THEAN returned to his studies from the fishing boat stronger and better in health. For a while he seemed well, but his anxiety to be ready for the government examinations made him neglect health, and in a few months the old difficulties returned with new and alarming symptoms.

“Grandmother,” said he, “there is something the matter with my feet and hands; a numbness is creeping up, and my toes and fingers are stiff. My head aches so that I can hardly study, and there are pains all through my body. It is impossible to be ready for the coming examination, and I fear I cannot be ready even for the one that follows, if I am ever able to pass.”

The grandmother was alarmed, especially at the numbness and stiffness of his fingers. Her questions troubled Thean, yet he did not learn from her what fears were disturbing her. Instead of telling him, she told her son later:—

“We must do something for our son or all our hopes for him must prove vain.”

“Why does my worthy mother speak thus?” asked the boatman respectfully.

“The leprosy is coming.”

“Leprosy?”

“Yes; leprosy.”

“Impossible! It cannot be.”

“Yet it is true. He has symptoms of the disease: and, unless something be done speedily, nothing but the power of gods can make the disease let go its hold. It is not too late yet. You must consult the best doctors, and his mother and I will do our utmost at the temples. The gods may hear our prayers and spare him, if we are faithful and liberal in offerings.”

Mr. Lin’s faith in the gods had not increased, nor did he have much more confidence in the doctors of his country. He, however, thought it would be no harm to allow the prayers and offerings at the temple, while he consulted a man in whom he had more faith than all the doctors of his own land.

The boatman had heard much of the success of a foreign physician in Amoy, and determined to take Thean to see him. Without consulting either his wife or mother, Mr. Lin went with his son to the office of the physician and through an interpreter told his story.

“Your son has no leprosy,” said the doctor, after a careful examination, “but he may have that or some other disease as fatal if he does not give more attention to his health. He is studying himself to

death. He must go north and remain for a winter in a cold climate; then, if he does not study meanwhile, he will be able to take up his studies again and keep on for years without trouble."

Mr. Lin and Thean urged the physician to give medicine to cure the symptoms. They said that it was impossible for him to go so far and remain away so long. They believed that the physician could give remedies that would speedily remove the difficulty.

"Medicines will not restore him; he must have rest, and must take it for several months," spoke the doctor to the interpreter. "All the medicines in the world will not save his life if he does not stop his studies and rest. If he follows my advice he will get well without medicine."

Unable to get further advice, and since no remedies were offered, father and son sadly left the physician's office. On their way home they talked over the advice, and unwillingly admitted that if nothing better seemed possible, the trip north must be considered.

"I cannot study; that is certain, unless something be done. And nothing thus far has helped me, except when I took rest. I believe that would soon make me feel better. But grandmother is so eager that I continue my studies that she will hardly consent to my resting even for a month."

"Even if you rest, will that remove the symptoms

of leprosy?" asked Mr. Lin, in response to what his son had said.

"But he said that I have no leprosy," replied Thean.

"Not yet; but you may have soon. Will it not be better to remove all danger? I do not wish you to go, yet will you not in the end gain time if you go? He said that you can study for years on your return."

"Will grandmother allow me to go?"

"She would rather have you go and return later than stay and die."

Old Mrs. Lin opposed the northern trip most vigorously, and insisted that it was nothing more than the effort of a foreigner to get rid of a bright, hopeful youth by sending him away from home forever.

"But he has performed wonderful cures, and says that this will restore Thean," urged Mr. Lin. "We know that rest is needed, — why not have him try? Nothing else will restore him to health."

"Nothing? Where are our doctors? Where are our gods? You forget your own, and think forever of foreigners. See some of our own doctors; meanwhile his mother and I will do our best at the temples," urged the old lady.

A month of trial brought no change for the better, and old Mrs. Lin yielded to Thean's request that he be allowed to try the northern climate.

It was in autumn, the northeast trade wind had set

in, and no Chinese junk would start north until the following spring. If Thean went by water at all, he must go by steamer, for even foreign sailing vessels seldom attempt a northern voyage at that time of the year. But the passage on a steamer, with board while north, would be an expensive trip for the young student. While Mr. Lin could afford it, he was too fond of money to spend so much if he could avoid it.

Fortunately, the very thing he wished for happened. A year before, Captain Brode of the *Forward*, a foreign coasting steamer, met Thean and requested his father to allow him to become cabin boy on a trip along the coast. The same vessel entered Anoy on her way north, and Mr. Lin determined to get his son the position now as cabin boy.

“I have a good boy, and do not care to change,” replied the commander to the boatman’s offer.

Before the *Forward* was ready to start that cabin boy had accepted an offer, and hired out as a clerk in the establishment of a foreign merchant. Mr. Lin was conveniently near when the fact became known that the vessel needed another cabin boy, but had nothing to say about his son until urged by Captain Brode to let him go along.

The boatman hesitated, and presented difficulty after difficulty. The distance was too great; time of absence too long; dangers serious; Thean not strong;

grandmother and mother very unwilling to part with him ; if willing to go, other captains would be glad to employ him at higher wages than could be afforded by the commander of the Forward ; so, on the whole, the father did not think it wise to close the bargain offered by the captain. Yet the boatman did not refuse it, and Captain Brode, compelled to get a boy, very anxious to have Thean, since there was hope of getting him, urged and increased the salary offered. He said that there would not be hard work, and the youth would be made strong by the voyage, so both sides would be satisfied. This willingness to accept one not altogether strong had an effect, and finally Mr. Lin agreed to let his son go ; but as a great favor to his friend, the captain, and at immense sacrifice of feeling on his part, and loss to Thean in time at school.

The captain thanked the father for the favor, and half believed him. Had he known that the boatman warned the former cabin boy of the cold and danger of a northern voyage in the winter, and got him the situation with the merchant, he would have felt less grateful.

“I shall never see you again,” cried old Mrs. Lin when she bade her grandson farewell, “but I will visit the temples daily to pray the gods to take care of you. Should you ever return, you will not forget your grandmother’s spirit in the unseen world.”

“Grandmother, I expect to be back next spring, well and strong, and to go with you to the temples to thank the gods for my restoration,” replied the youth cheerfully. “You will be glad then that you allowed me to go. And think how many dollars I shall bring back with me for my work! Beside, I shall see much of the world, and learn more than if I were well and remained at school.”

The younger Mrs. Lin bade her son farewell with a sigh; then was silent. After he left, she disappeared, nor was she seen again during the day. For days after she did not mention her son’s name. When it was spoken in her presence a sigh told the mother’s feeling.

Mr. Lin tried to remain cheerful, as he took his son to the Forward in his best boat, and remained at the vessel’s buoy, waving his boy farewell until distance and darkness hid him from the father.

Captain Brode was a kind-hearted man, and allowed his cabin boy to remain on deck until Amoy had disappeared. Nor then did he command him to go to duty.

“Be easy with him, steward,” said the captain. “He is new to the work, nor is he strong. He will be all right in a few days, and then will show what he can do. I am not wrong in my judgment. His bright eyes and honest face mean all they say.”

After the steamer was fairly out on the ocean and

had taken her course, the captain entered the cabin and tried to talk with Thean in "pigeon," that is, business English.

This is a mixture of English and other words, in Chinese idioms, with terminations that belong to no civilized tongue. The following conversation between the captain and Thean will give some idea of this pigeon English.

"You savee Chinaman talkee; my savee Englishman talkee. My wanchee you talkee me all o same Chinaman talkee. My wanchee learn talkee all o same Chinaman talkee. You tellee me? You savee?" said the captain.

Thean replied, "My tly. My no savee muchee Englishman talkee. My wanchee learn chop chop."

"Velly well. Mollow day we begin," responded the commander.

Put in plain English, this would be, "You understand Chinese; I understand English. I wish you to speak to me as the Chinese speak. I wish to learn Chinese. Will you teach me? Do you understand?"

"I will try. I do not understand much English. I wish to learn very quickly."

"Very well. To-morrow we begin."

The two made slow progress in getting acquainted, until the steward was called to assist as interpreter. Then the youth informed the captain that the Chinese

spoken at Canton and Hong Kong would hardly be understood at Swatow, much less at Amoy ; and would be quite unlike the language at Foochow and ports farther north. He said dialects differ so much that they seem almost entirely different languages ; and the number of dialects cannot be told, because they blend or join together by such gradations that it is impossible to tell where one ends and another begins.

“ What shall I do ? ” asked the captain in despair. “ I want to learn your language, that I may transact business with your people in their own tongue. According to your statement, I must learn at least half a dozen different languages, before I can speak to the people in the various ports.”

“ If you learn the mandarin dialect,” responded the youth, “ you will find people, and especially officials, in every port to whom you can speak. Beside, it is the language of the north. Every one in the northern part of the land speaks it.”

“ Do you know anything about that dialect ? ”

“ I do.”

“ How did you learn, since it is not spoken at Amoy ? ”

“ It is spoken at the yamen, and by many others.”

“ What did you do at the yamen ? Do you mean to be an official some day ? ”

“ Perhaps so. I learned some from the yamen ;

more from those speaking the dialect; most from my teacher. Since it is the language of the mandarins, and every student who expects to graduate hopes some day to become an officer, it seemed necessary that I learn it."

"Is it more difficult than other dialects?"

"I think not. When we know one dialect, it is easy to learn another, for the idiom is the same, and words resemble each other. If you wish to learn mandarin, I will try to teach you; and you may use it while north."

"How did the Chinese language become divided by dialects?"

"Probably by people remaining secluded. They spoke word after word unlike their distant neighbors, and thus gradually changes came and grew."

The Forward stopped at different ports on business, occasionally because of storms; and thus Thean saw much of the country, not a little of foreigners. His voyage became a school as well as a health trip.

He had been at sea only a short time when headaches disappeared, strength returned, and he felt well. Though well in body, his heart was sick for home. He counted the months and then days before the time for return would come. Never did days seem longer than the first ten. After a while he became contented, then almost happy.

The captain had told Mr. Lin that his northern voyage would take months, and that he expected to carry a cargo to Japan; probably would find enough business to keep him north until spring; but he said nothing about being compelled to lay up his vessel for repairs. Reaching a northern port, he made repairs, and thus Thean saw ice and snow for the first time in his life.

At first the youth shivered, and feared to go outside the cabin; but extra clothing and exercise changed his fear, so that he enjoyed the cold and delighted in the vigorous climate.

Not until spring was the vessel ready for sea again; and then, to Thean's disappointment, the cargo for Japan was ready. Though a voyage to a foreign land was a treat worth all it cost, the youth would gladly have missed it and gone directly home. He had heard nothing from his relatives, and did not know whether they were dead or alive. He might have received letters, but Chinese are not given to letter writing. They had no regular mails, except as managed by foreigners along the coast, so letters were seldom sent.

Late in the spring the *Forward* started on her return, and Thean counted the days before Amoy would be in sight. He wished now for the northeast monsoon; and wished that it would blow harder than any remnant of the winter trade wind blew. The increasing southwest wind, as the vessel passed along the coast;

might tell of warmer weather, but it told of a longer voyage.

These trade winds, or monsoons, as they are called, blow quite regularly, not always steadily, from the northeast during the latter part of autumn, all of winter, and the first part of spring. The rest of the year the southwest wind has right of way, and usually keeps it. In spring and autumn there seems a contest, always ending in favor of the southwest in the former, the northeast in the latter season.

The *Forward*, entering Formosa Channel, came on a fleet of anchored fishing vessels, and changed her course to avoid disturbing them. Meanwhile another steamer from the south approached, but moved directly for the fleet. No warning was given, nor did any one on the steamer seem to notice the smaller craft.

The fishermen doubtless supposed the stranger would change her course like the *Forward*. Not until too late did two crews hurry to hoist anchors and sails to escape. The stranger's iron prow crashed into a fishing vessel; a cry of terror came from the helpless crew, and then boat and men disappeared. A few moments later two men were seen clinging to a portion of the wreck that floated, and their voices heard in a despairing cry for help.

"That's the way with Captain —," said Captain Brode. "He is worse than a brute; he acts like a

demon. I have heard that he never turns out for fishermen ; I have seen it now. Such men ought never to be allowed on the sea. He will say that they are only heathen. Well, if he thinks he is better, I would rather take my chance among heathen at the judgment than with him. What if they are heathen ? Life is sweet to them, and they have as much right to live as he. But, see there, Thean ! Why don't those other fishermen save those poor fellows ? ”

The strange vessel kept on her way, no one on board appearing to notice what had happened, and the poor fishermen shouted in vain for help. Their companions in the other boats near had escaped the destruction, and now were settling down again to business, as if nothing unusual had occurred.

“ They flaid to save them ; evil spilits of water pull them in if they pull dlowning men out,” answered Thean to the captain’s inquiry.

“ Well, something must be done. Those poor fellows must be saved. It’s a shame to let them perish.”

Saying this, the captain ordered the vessel’s course changed and a boat’s crew to get ready to rescue the men from the wreck. When the steamer stopped, the captain bade Thean order the fishermen nearest the wreck go to the rescue of their comrades. No notice was taken of the command ; nor yet after it had been twice repeated.

“Tell them if they don’t save those poor fellows I’ll run them down,” spoke the commander to his cabin boy.

The only response to this was a speedy hoisting of anchors and sails, and each boat made all haste to get away.

“Why don’t they save those fellows?” asked the captain.

“They flaid you bleak their boats,” replied Thean.

“We’ve got to save them or they will perish,” said the captain half to himself.

In a few minutes the steamer’s boat had the wrecked fishermen and was turning to the Forward.

“Take them to the nearest fishing boat,” shouted the captain.

The sailors tried to obey, but the fishermen, by the aid of oars and sails, kept away, and the unfortunates were brought on board the Forward.

“What kind of men are fishermen?” asked the captain of the cabin boy. “Why do they refuse to take their own companions on board?”

“They flaid to do it. Bad spilits in water want men; if don’t get them, will get men what save them. They don’t want to die, so won’t lisk lives.”

“Then they are more afraid of bad than of good spirits. If good spirits don’t punish them for such neglect, then I see no use of good spirits. But what

nonsense! Can't good spirits take care of men who rescue others? Perhaps you think that captain who ran over the boat and killed or drowned the others of the wrecked crew a bad man; yet remember he was a stranger. Those who refused to save the fellows in the water were friends, perhaps relatives. You people think foreigners are hard-hearted; but remember that your countrymen are even worse."

When the rescued men came on deck they approached the captain, bowed low to him, then kneeled down and kissed his feet. After that they looked up into his face, while they knelt, and with folded hands worshiped him as if a god, and began to pray.

"Tell them not to do that," said the captain to Thean, as he gently lifted up the fishermen. "Tell them that I have simply done what every foreign Christian would or should do. Tell them, too, that the captain who ran down their boat, though from a Christian land, is not a Christian, but boasts that he worships no God nor does he care for any."

After they had been lifted to their feet, the rescued men addressed the captain in their own language, and again attempted to kneel before him. This he refused to allow, and bade Thean tell them that they were welcome to a passage to Amoy, and food and whatever comforts they needed while on his ship. Then he asked:—

“ What are they saying anyway?”

“ They say that you lesclued them, and all they have is yours. They say they have wife, childden, home who istlave if they ddown. You save all. They never folget what you do. If you b'long to God, your God better than Chinaman gods. When they see your God they tell what you do, and ask him give you gleat liches and long life.”

“ All right. But tell them that they can have my God as their own. He is a God who cares for fishermen, and wants all to serve and love him. He don't want anybody to die, and commands us to save life everywhere.”

Though Thean had noticed that the captain was a man of prayer, it made no great impression on him. He merely thought him devoted to his God, as Chinese are to theirs. When the commander spoke of Jesus Christ the youth listened, but without interest, and forgot what had been said. The captain's rescue of these men, and his reason, made an impression on the mind of the student that did not pass away.

While such men as Captain Brode may be rare, they are not unknown. The author met them in the East. Such as commanded the strange steamer were not unknown either, years ago; it is to be hoped that they have all left the sea and given place to men more worthy to command a ship.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GRADUATE.

THEAN returned from his voyage sun-browned, rugged, and well. All symptoms of leprosy, except stiffness of the finger joints, had passed away.

He was ready for study and found something to inspire him. Friends of learning had arranged for an examination in Amoy ; and all students, except those who had already passed a government examination, might compete. As an inducement, prizes, ranging from a few dollars down to a few dimes, had been offered for the twenty best scholars in Amoy and vicinity.

Thean became a candidate at once, though he hardly expected to gain a prize ; nor did he care very much if he did not. This trial would fit him for the more severe one of the government.

On the appointed day, with many older, not a few younger than himself, the young student entered the room and learned what the test would be. Each must write an essay of six hundred words, on a subject to be announced then, and have it ready without blot or mistake within five hours. This work must be done with no other help than memory gave, though the stu-

dent might quote as much as he would, providing he quoted correctly.

A few minutes were allowed for preparation after the doors were closed, then the subject was given and the students began their work. Long before the time expired most of the candidates had completed their task, and waited for the doors to open. Some unfortunate ones were compelled to leave the building at the end of the hours without finishing their work. They had failed.

Each completed essay was handed to persons appointed to receive it, and the writers were told that, as soon as the judges could examine and decide, the prizes should be awarded without fear or favor. The names of successful competitors would be found in due time posted on the bulletin.

The days which passed before the announcement were anxious ones to Thean. Each morning he visited the bulletin to see if the decision had been made. When he saw a crowd standing before the place one day, he knew that the time had come. Pressing through the multitude, he saw the board and read downward. To his delight his name was eleventh on the list! He had taken the eleventh prize! The money amounted to a little less than two dollars, but what cared he for that? He stood eleventh among the hundreds of undergraduate students in the vicinity of Amoy!

He did not wait long for the congratulations of his friends, but hurried home with the good news. No one was more pleased than old Mrs. Lin. She declared that this was proof that Thean had a bright future before him ; and he need but hasten forward to gain the greatness and wealth in store.

Such examinations are not uncommon in China, and are intended to urge forward young students, and prompt others to seek an education. Those offering prizes are regarded as friends of learning and justly popular.

Though few governments show more respect for learning than the Chinese do, few nations of equal advance have a larger proportion of people who cannot read. Just how great is this proportion is difficult to say ; those who should know do not agree in their opinions. Nor is that strange. The proportion varies in different parts of the country. And the question may fairly be asked, How much can the people read ? Though a man knows a few hundred characters, he cannot read an ordinary book. To be able to read in Chinese, one must be familiar with two or three thousand characters at least. Since each is unlike the others, this gives a difficult task, and requires years of study.

Not only does the peculiarity of the language make learning a greater task in China than in other countries,

but poverty is a great obstacle in the way. Schools are not free; each must pay for his education. Though the price of the teacher be small, varying from one to many dollars a year for each pupil, even a single dollar may be hard to get. Most of the boys are compelled to earn their living as soon as able to work.

Those familiar with the Middle Kingdom say that about one fourth of the men can read a little; others, that not one in a hundred can read any ordinary book. Both statements may be true. Girls seldom learn to read, hardly ever go to school. If taught at all, they are daughters of the rich, who can afford to have private teachers.

Inspired by his success, Thean prepared for the first government examination. Several days before it took place he went with his security to Tong Wan and entered as a candidate. His security was a sewtsai, to whom he paid a few dollars for his services during the whole examination. For this the man agreed, according to custom, to accompany him to the examinations, to teach him what to do, except that he could not enter the hall with him; to assure the officials that he was honest and faithful, and that he would do all he promised; and further to warrant that his statements were true and correct. Because each candidate *must have* a sewtsai for security, Thean engaged, for

a few hundred cash, another, in case the first could not attend.

The candidate's application stated in writing that he entered the examination for the honor learning gave, and not to make money by it, nor yet to become a teacher, nor to represent another. It further gave his name, age, weight, size, color of his hair; said that he wore no mustache; told the names of his parents, grandparents, neighbors on either side, and principal teacher. Not least, it declared that he was not a descendant of any of the classes forbidden by law to enter a government examination.

The sewtsai witnessed to the truth of these statements, and then the application was stamped. For this stamping the candidate paid a fee, and for another fee it was registered. For a third fee the young man received a paper bearing his number and entitling him to enter the examination as competitor.

Before daylight on the day of trial, Thean and his security waited before the Tong Wan hall in a crowd for the doors to open. At sunrise an officer unlocked and threw them open, and another called by number the candidates for examination. As each was summoned, he appeared with his sewtsai; the latter answering all questions, the other merely nodding assent.

When Thean's number was called, he appeared with

teapot, bottle of wine, and basket of food; and responded, as had others before him, to the questions. Then he was carefully examined, his clothing searched, and his food closely scrutinized, lest he have a hidden book or paper to help in the examination. After this search, a roll of paper bearing his number was handed him, and he was directed to his numbered seat in the hall.

This search is not a mere matter of form. The classics are published in very small characters, so that copies may be smuggled into the hall in garments or food, or by watchers themselves. A candidate discovered with one is dismissed in disgrace, but may return at the next examination season, for the officers are supposed to have forgotten, or he to have repented.

The hall was a barnlike structure, having small cells, each with a wooden bench and desk, and space enough for the student to sit but not lie down. Though shut in from others, they are open to watchers on raised platforms.

When every cell had its occupant, the outer doors were shut, locked, and sealed; nor could any enter or leave until a sufficient number of candidates had completed their work to make it advisable to let them go. Sickness and even death would not suffice to open the doors. If one dies, and such a case is not unknown, the

body must remain until night, and then be removed, not by the door, but through an opening made in the wall.

There are three examinations to be passed for the degree of sewtsai, the first at the town hall, the second at the county seat, and the third there or wherever else the Literary Chancellor, who is chief director, orders it.

As the third is the most important and like the others, it will be sufficient to describe that more fully and pass by the other two with a few words regarding each.

Thean completed his work at the first trial long before sunset, and departed with the second company. After many days he visited Tong Wan to hear the decision. He had been successful, and his name was near the top of the list. This made probable his passing the second and third. He had now what is known as "a name in the town"; that is, his name was posted in the town as a successful competitor at the first of the three examinations.

The second examination was at Chin Chew; and again the young man passed, now receiving "a name in the county." The third, if successful, would give him "a name in the state."

The terms *town*, *county*, and *state* are used because they will be better understood than a translation of Chinese names; yet town, county, and state do not give the full idea.

At the first examination candidates came from only a small district, at the second from a much larger, and at the third from a larger still. Those at the second had been successful at the first in the various towns; those at the third had passed at the various county examinations. So it is believed, though favoritism sometimes prevails, each contains better students than the preceding, and every trial is more severe than the one before it. Each has more candidates than the preceding one, for those who have passed the lower and failed at the higher are allowed to try at each succeeding one until successful. Thus by adding those who have failed before to the new candidates, the number grows.

The final examinations took place at Chin Chew, the county seat. This city, though far more important than Amoy politically, is much smaller; but if the number of people at the examination indicated size, it might almost have rivaled the larger town. Sewtsais came to report to their literary superior, and to show their interest in the candidates and examination; candidates were there in great numbers; still larger was the number of those who hoped at no distant day to compete for literary honors, while other friends of candidates swarmed in the city. In addition, multitudes who were neither students nor their friends, but simply eager for excitement, came to see and hear.

It was the harvest for traveling merchants and wandering mechanics. They came from all parts to earn a few hundred cash, or take their chances at winning more by gambling.

Many candidates, like Thean, were young, and undergoing their first trial ; others were older, and meant to attempt for the second, third, or fourth time what had proved a failure before. Nor were candidates limited to the fourth or even fortieth attempt. Old, white-headed men were there, to try again what they had failed to accomplish since their youth. Inspired by the often repeated stories of candidates who, after spending a lifetime in study, gained the first degree only at the close, they had continued to seek this honor. Though unable to win at last, they might be rewarded finally for faithfulness, if not fitness ; for occasionally the government confers the first degree on men who have spent their years in vain study for it. The writer was told that occasionally at the same examination grandfather, father, and son are candidates, and the first named has not been absent from an examination, unless through illness, since youth. Chinese devotion to learning and desire for literary titles amount to a passion.

The number of candidates was so much greater than at Tong Wan that only one third could be admitted on one day. These were taken from the same and

adjoining towns, that friends and acquaintances might compete together.

Thean was questioned as closely as at the first trial, and searched even more carefully. Then, with food and drink, and carrying the roll of paper bearing his number, he entered and was shown to his cell in the hall. When that was full the doors were closed, locked, and sealed, and the Literary Chancellor announced the subjects for two essays, one to contain not less than six hundred, the other seven hundred words, and a poem of sixty.

Thirteen hundred and sixty words for a day was not so difficult a task, especially since the whole might be quoted by men of remarkable memories; but each production must be without error, erasure, or blot, and each quotation must be in the exact words of the author. Quotations would not be at all objectionable; on the contrary, if each essay and poem were made up entirely of the thoughts of others, provided everything were well arranged and neatly done, the work would be counted worthy of special honor. No matter whose thoughts they were, whether the candidate's or not, if good and beautifully expressed, they would commend themselves to the judges. It is the general opinion that anything written by the men of old must be good, since so many generations of learning and wisdom have admired and pronounced them worthy.

Thean had an excellent memory, and was able to quote passage after passage, line after line, and page after page, in the exact words of the author, and could tell the book, page, and line of every quotation. Wonderful as this feat may seem to us, it is not wonderful to a Chinaman. The student in the Middle Kingdom is expected and taught to do it; if unable, after years of study, his student life is counted a failure.

The first subject was easy, and the young candidate determined to begin with that. His mind was fresh, thoughts came rapidly, and memory brought up the sayings of the sages more swiftly than he could write them. Counting, he found that his first and longest essay lacked only thirty-seven words of the full number. But the closing sentence did not satisfy him. He must add another, and make it strong, beautiful, and full. To do this required nearly as much time as had been taken for all that preceded. Before he had fully determined what should be the closing sentence, memory brought to him a thought of an old writer, known and honored among the scholars of China.

“Just what I need,” said the youth almost aloud. “This exactly fits the thought and ends the essay better than anything of my own could. Surely I need have no fear for my first, whatever may be the second.”

Less than one fourth of the day gone! More than one third of the work completed! Thean believed himself lucky. "Grandmother would say the gods have helped; father, that it is good luck; but I think, after all, that it is the result of hard work in the past," said Thean to himself, as he laid the completed essay aside to begin the second.

The youth's mind worked more sluggishly. He had grown weary, yet thoughts that had come on the shorter essay remained in his mind, and those were arranged and jotted down, to be written later on the examination paper when ready for final copying.

A cup of tea stimulated the sluggish mind, and the student started anew. A second cup made him feel as fresh as ever, and memory brought idea after idea, until he felt like bidding her rest and allow him to use what he had. Counting the words, after his thoughts had been arranged, he found that he had nearly thirty words too many. What should he cut out? Which idea would be best for closing? How could he put what seemed to be best in the most telling words and the fewest?

Before two o'clock the second essay lay beside the first, ready for the eyes of the judge. Thean had eaten his breakfast, sipped his wine, rested, and was ready for the poem. Instead of copying the second essay at once, he had waited and rested, eaten and drunk,

that he might assure himself, when hunger did not plead, that he had chosen the best form and words.

Thean's last task was the least. He loved to write poetry, the subject was simple, and the poem must be short. Long before evening his work was done and handed to the proper officer; then the young candidate, with a number of others, was allowed to pass out to receive the congratulation of his friends.

"Did you turn over the last corner and paste it down?" asked Mr. Lin in private of his son, after Thean had told about the essays and poem.

"Certainly; that is the rule."

"And the judges cannot see your name hidden under that corner?"

"No; my name is entirely hidden. But why do you ask?"

"Because, if the judges could see your name they might decide in your favor, if I told them that it would pay to do it."

"I think there will be no need of any help. Most of my work is quotation from the sages. Surely no judge will decide against the great minds of the past."

Thean remained at Chin Chew until the close of the examinations, and then went home to wait for the decision. That did not come speedily. The youth wondered why so much time was necessary. Nor can

others, unfamiliar with the methods and purpose of the judges, understand why it requires so many days to decide on the merits of even thousands of short essays and brief poems.

After the first reading the number is small. Each defective essay and poem has been thrown out. At the next reading those lacking in literary qualities disappear. Then the sifting follows other lines. But the greatest difficulty is in bringing down the number to the required limit. Not all who deserve win the sewtsai's honor; the number is limited, and from the many worthy essays and poems a few must be selected. The limit is not according to the number of inhabitants, but the amount of taxes paid, unless, for several reasons, the emperor has increased the number.

Thean was at Chin Chew when the decision was announced. To many others it was a sad judgment, and many a student turned away with a heavy heart. Not so Thean. On the list of **SUCCESSFUL** candidates he saw the name of **LIN THEAN KHEH**. True he was not yet entitled to the sewtsai's button, but he was certain to receive it now. He need but write correctly from memory, at a later examination, the sacred edict of the Emperor Kang Hi of old, and there would be nothing to hinder. Since he first learned to write he had practiced on that, and for this very purpose; so it was almost impossible to blunder.

Later Thean and the other successful men met to copy the sacred edict; and then he must wait for the final decision. Time is not precious in China. What is not done this year may be attended to the next; perhaps that will be as well; so the Chinese are patient.

After a long delay Thean was notified that he had been successful, and the government had determined to confer the honor of sewtsai on him. In time he wore on his hat the button of the graduate of the first degree, and was numbered among the learned men of the Middle Kingdom.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPTAIN THEAN.

NO one was more pleased than old Mrs. Lin at Thean's success. She said that he had made glorious the name of Lin, and that now she might die in peace, were she not desirous that he gain still higher honor. Said she:—

“I prayed the gods that you might become rich, wise, and great; and my prayer has been partly, no doubt it will be entirely, answered. But now I wish greater honor. Next comes the kujin, then the chinsu greatness; and I shall not be content until you reach that; nor even then unless you become a mandarin. Then my prayer will be answered fully. As a mandarin you will be wise, and must become rich.”

“Grandmother, I thank you for your prayers and good wishes. Whatever I owe to the gods, I know that I owe much to your stimulating words and constant urging. You held before me a bright future, and made me long to have it a reality. Though I no longer need your encouraging words, I hope you will live to share with me the honor that you did so much to gain.”

“Thean, beware that you do not allow yourself to

become satisfied with the sewtsai honor. Remember there are multitudes of sewtsais, many kujins, but few chinsus. You will find that the first degree is gained comparatively easily, the next at a far greater sacrifice of time and strength, while the last requires very great time, patience, and effort. Were it not so, there would be as many in the highest, as now in the lowest degree."

"Grandmother, I shall not forget; nor can I. According to law I must continue my studies, or my degree may be taken away. At each examination I must be present to prove to the Literary Chancellor, when others receive their titles, that I am worthy to retain mine."

"I know; and therefore feel less anxious. I am now the more thankful that your father did not try to purchase the degree for you. I have been told that many buy, even though it costs a thousand dollars, the button of the sewtsai; and I am glad that men of learning despise honors that have been bought rather than earned. Such honors may bring office; that is not to be despised; but they do not exalt learning. The older I grow the more I see the value of education, the more I respect and reverence it. In some future life I hope to be learned too."

The reader may wish to know the meaning and honor connected with these titles. "Sewtsai," translated

beautiful ability, corresponds to Bachelor of Arts ; "Kujin," translated *advanced man*, corresponds to Master of Arts ; and "Chinsu," translated *exalted scholar*, corresponds to Doctor of Laws. Special privileges accompany these honors. The men who bear them cannot be arrested like ordinary persons ; and, if arrested at all, must be tried by members of their own order before the chief. They have far greater influence with mandarins than common people, so are employed for legal and other business with the government ; thus they are in positions for making money ; and they usually let few such chances pass unimproved. They also have first and chief places in the line of official appointments. According to rule, mandarins are taken first from chinsus, second from kujins, and third from sewtsais. A common person, therefore, stands little chance for office. True, some officials, and prominent ones at that, never graduated or entered an examination hall ; they hardly know how to read. But they are exceptions ; and they gained their positions either through purchase or peculiar ability.

After graduation Thean rested. He had learned by experience ; so resolved to gain all possible strength before starting anew in his studies. But he would not remain idle ; nor could he, as sewtsai, engage in every occupation. The life of a fisherman or sailor suited him ; yet neither was dignified enough for a graduate.

He might enter his father's office ; nothing would please the former boatman more, now that he had enough business for an office and even a clerk, but Thean wished open air exercise. The water suited him best, if he could find something satisfactory to the honor and dignity of his degree.

“ Father, why not let me take charge of that boat to-morrow ? ” said he, as the report came that a captain was too ill to make his trip the next day. “ I believe I can sail her, for I know the channel. If I do not, the men do ; and it will save the expense of another captain.”

Mr. Lin gladly gave consent, and Thean was on board early the next morning. The crew welcomed the young sewtsai with some fear. They did not believe a scholar knew enough, outside of books, to sail a sampan, that is, a small rowboat, much less a large passenger vessel. Yet it would not do to object, for boatmen were plenty, and another crew could be hired in five minutes if they declined to go.

After a short consultation, they decided to allow the new commander to take charge, but determined, for the owner's sake, to listen to his commands only when these did not endanger the vessel.

When the old boatmen learned that the owner's son, the scholar, was in command, they prophesied a wreck, a collision, a failure to reach the destination before the

tide turned, and other calamities more or less dreadful. But when the boat returned with a full load of passengers, on time, the old boatmen said the trouble would come later. Good luck would not last.

It was the same the next day, and the next. Then the old commander returned, and asked for his vessel. But Thean was unwilling to give it up, and asked his father to send the captain to take charge of another. The old sailor changed unwillingly. Doubtless Thean would soon be tired, if he did not wreck the vessel, so all would be well by and by.

At first the young captain was unpopular with passengers and crew. He ordered the vessel to be kept neat, and said that it was not a place for filth, since it carried respectable human beings. He told the crew that they were paid to work, not waste time in idleness, and ordered them to clean up and keep clean every part of the junk ; and then had seats and other comforts provided for passengers. The crew, after necessary work was done, were allowed to rest and treated with kindness. The captain never spoke harshly nor used unkind language ; and before a month had passed Captain Thean commanded the most popular vessel sailing from Amoy.

Passengers and crew were surprised one day at what they thought a strange freak of the young captain. His vessel was beating against the wind, when a cry

reached her from a fisherman near by who had fallen over, and was unable to again reach his anchored boat. Near were several comrades, busy with lines and nets and seemingly taking no notice whatever of the drowning man.

Seeing their disregard, Thean ordered the steersman to change the vessel's course and run directly toward the anchored boats, as he hurried to the bow. When close upon the smaller vessels, the young captain ordered his own headed to the wind and then he shouted: —

“ Why do not you save that man in the water? ”

“ If we pull him out, the evil spirits will get us, ” was the response.

“ Pull him out, or something worse than evil spirits will get you! ” shouted back the captain.

“ We will not! What right have you to command us? He is no friend of yours! ” answered the man.

“ He is my friend, and yours too. He belongs to our country, and has a right to our help. Pull him out or go into the water yourselves! ” shouted the captain fiercely, directing his own vessel's prow toward the nearest fisherman.

“ Do not run over us! Do not run over us! ” shouted the one whose boat seemed the aim of the junk.

At once the fishermen sprang to the ropes and began to pull up anchors to escape.

“You can’t get away! Hand me that gun,” spoke Thean, addressing himself first to the fishermen, then to a member of his crew. Raising the gun to his shoulder, the captain shouted in a determined voice, “Go to that man, and save him, or die yourselves!”

“Don’t shoot! don’t shoot!” begged the men, pulling all the harder and working more rapidly at the ropes.

“Save that man, or I shoot! Nor will I stop with one! A man who refuses to save his fellows is not fit to live!”

Instead of obeying, the men dropped the anchors in their boats and pulled for shore. But the report of the gun, and the whistle of the ball over them, striking the water ahead, stopped for a moment the movements of the frightened fellows. They were starting anew when Thean said to his crew:—

“Hand me another gun, and bring several more here. If they mean to let him drown, their spirits shall keep him company.”

This was enough. With a piteous cry for mercy, the men turned toward their exhausted comrade, and pulled him from the water; then got his boat and took both ashore.

Not until he saw the unfortunate man safe did the captain go on his way.

Though he had saved a human life, he had won the hatred of the fishermen, and the fear of passengers. These said that the evil spirits, robbed of their prey, would soon make him their victim, so his vessel must be unsafe for traveling. Though these fears were not realized, boatmen at Amoy believed that the time would come when the commander and his vessel must pay the penalty for daring to interfere with the evil spirits of the water. When told that there was little danger, and that no harm had come to vessel or crew, the superstitiously wise ones shook their heads and said that time would show.

About this time rumors reached Amoy that pirates had taken possession of a village at the mouth of a river emptying into the bay. By and by a boat was missing; nor could any one tell what had become of its crew. Later another crew failed to report. Then a boat was attacked at night, and allowed to go on its way after the robbers had taken a part of the cargo. Another ran aground a few days later and was robbed of all its freight.

These stories grew; the deeds became bolder. Boatmen were alarmed; passengers refused to travel; freight was unsafe, and business by that route failed.

Strange stories were told about the pirates. It was said that they were Amoy boatmen, and that the mandarins of the district to which the village belonged

were in partnership with the rascals. Unless complaint were made to Pekin or Foochow, and only the rich and influential dared do that, it would be worse than useless to try to capture the robbers.

Mr. Lin was one of the sufferers, for his business over the route by the pirate village had been destroyed. He spoke to Thean about making complaint to the Amoy mandarins. Said the son:—

“Father, the Amoy mandarins have no authority over that village; nor yet those of Tong Wan. The officers under whose authority it is have a bad reputation; yet, unless a great crime be committed, no other officer will care to have anything to do with those pirates. The mandarins there would do their utmost to bring charges, true or false, against any who might interfere with their business. Officers in other places have been known to share in the plunder of robbers; why may it not be true that those do?”

“You have influence; why not make complaint yourself?” asked the father.

“Were I to do that, I would win the enmity of mandarins, and might not be able to gain office at all. If you will let me try, those robbers may be captured without difficulty, and without calling on the government either. I am certain that I can stop some of this river piracy.”

Mr. Lin gladly consented, after hearing the plans of

his son ; and Thean gave up the passenger boat to the old captain, then busied himself with something else. When asked by boatmen what he was doing, the young man replied :—

“ I mean to prove that there are no pirates at that village. It is merely a trick of some of my father’s foes. They have driven him from the business ; and, as soon as they believe he will not return to it, they will start in business for themselves. I mean to prove to his boatmen that we can take a valuable cargo right past that village at night in perfect safety.”

“ Do you mean to say that all these stories about pirates are false, and that no boat nor crew has disappeared from Amoy within the last six months ? ”

“ I have nothing to say about the disappearance. I only say that there are no pirates in that village, and I mean to prove it. Those who have disappeared went elsewhere. When my cargo is complete, I shall sail so as to reach that village at night and prove my words.”

Thean was in no haste to start on his trip, and told those who asked, on his day of sailing, why he did not hurry and get well past the pirate village before dark, that he was not afraid. If he could not reach his destination with one tide he would wait for the next. All the other boats had gone an hour or two before he, with his small crew, started. His freight, brought on

board at the last moment, consisted of a number of very large, heavy boxes.

The vessel had passed the pirate village less than a mile when the tide changed, and Thean anchored; not, however, until he had drifted down nearly opposite the home of the supposed pirates. Long before this a strange transformation had taken place on the junk. The boxes had been opened and were empty, while the deck almost swarmed with a crew of armed men.

Filling two large boxes with what heavy material lay about, the crew placed them near the gangway, and by them two others that were empty; then stowed the others so as to give a hiding-place for all who were not on watch. This done, the captain took his position at the stern, stationed another man at the bow, and two more on each side of the vessel, and bade the others hide behind the boxes.

It was a clear but moonless night; the air was perfectly still, and silence was supreme. Hours passed, but no pirates appeared; none were heard. Had Thean been deceived? His watchers became impatient, and, approaching him one at a time, asked if he thought the pirates would really come. Bidding them return to their posts and watch very carefully, he said that there was little doubt that an attack would be made before morning.

Shortly after midnight the captain's ear caught a slight sound from the shore as of dipping oars moving against the tide. The sound died away, and again there was perfect stillness. Watching up stream, down stream, ashore in the opposite direction, the commander's keen eyes saw something coming down with the stream directly toward his vessel. At the same time he heard the dipping of oars shoreward; and the sound came nearer. Before he was decided, the watcher at the bow appeared, and, in great excitement, whispered that a boat was drifting down upon them with the tide.

Bidding the man hasten back and send another to him, Thean told the other watcher, as he came, to arouse every man, and tell each to be ready at his appointed post; for the pirates were coming in two boats, one rowing slowly from the shore, the other drifting down with the current. They probably would reach the junk at the same time.

In a few minutes the boats were near enough to reveal many men seated low, as if to hide their bodies from possible watchers, while a few only were rowing in one, two in the other. They had timed their movements well, and as the drifting boat came alongside, the other was fastening at the opposite gangway.

All this had been done so quietly that no sleeper, hardly even an alert watcher who had not seen them,

would have detected the boats by the sound. Even the work of fastening was done as if ghosts were handling the ropes.

As the smaller vessels came alongside the junk, the pirates, leaving a few of their number in the boats, leaped to the deck like cats ; and, while two hurried to fasten the little cabin, the rest began moving the heavy boxes to their own craft. Then they came back for the two remaining near. These were light — empty ! What did that mean ? The men who had worked in silence until now stopped and whispered, asking what those empty boxes could be there for. Hesitating what to do, some stepped toward the other boxes, and were about testing their weight.

This was the signal for a terrific yell from the stern, echoed by another from the bow, and followed by a horrid tumult of yells from a mass of armed men springing from behind the boxes.

The pirates, surprised, frightened, almost paralyzed with terror, shrieked and leaped for their boats. Before they could tumble over the gangway, many were knocked down or rendered otherwise helpless by the crew ; some more were taken prisoners, and a few gained courage to resist. Those in the boats, overcome by sudden fright for the moment, were neither able to come to their comrades' help nor yet to cut loose and escape. One attempted to loosen the rope,



THE PIRATES.

but he was speedily overpowered by members of Thean's crew leaping into the boat and commanding the surrender of every robber there. Nor was there much delay if by any one the demand was disobeyed. It was a command and next a blow.

Two leaped into the water and disappeared ; a number, grasping their weapons, attempted to fight. But the odds were too greatly against them. Fighting meant dying, even if the fighter succeeded first in killing or wounding any of the crew. Those who gained enough courage to fight before they were overpowered, saw that resistance was hopeless and sure to result in death, so begged for mercy.

The plea was granted, and soon every man, except the two who sprang into the water and those who were so badly wounded that they were helpless, was made a prisoner and securely tied. Several of the wounded were badly hurt, four dangerously and two fatally, while one had been killed outright.

A number of Thean's men had been hurt, but their wounds were not serious ; the men were proud to show that these proved their valor.

Twenty minutes after the first pirate trod the junk's deck the struggle was over. Thean had all but two of the rascals in his power, and without sacrificing the life of a single member of his crew.

Bidding his men clear the deck and prepare for the

return to Amoy, the young captain busied himself with the most seriously wounded of his prisoners. He could, however, do little for them beyond giving them comfortable places about the deck. Seeing his kindness, the robbers declared that it was not as hard to be trapped by a kind man as by a cruel one.

As speedily as possible the junk, towing her two prizes, started for Amoy; and by daylight, with a cargo of pirates and empty boxes, came to anchor in the harbor near the city.

CHAPTER XX.

A MANDARIN.

THE excitement caused by Thean's arrival with a lot of pirates was increased when it was known that several were former boatmen of Amoy. Their friends came to the young man and begged him to let them go; then they offered money for their release, and finally demanded that they be delivered over to the mandarins of the district in which they lived.

"Why do that?" asked Thean. "My vessel does not belong to that district, nor do I. They robbed, or meant to, not in their district but on the water; so, since they were captured on an Amoy vessel, they must be handed over to the Amoy officers."

The pirate chief begged for mercy, and pleaded that his whole crew must die if given over to Amoy mandarins. Then he added:—

"We killed none of your men, nor did we intend even to harm any. That is the reason that I ordered men to lock, as we supposed, yourself and crew in the cabin. We did not wish to harm you, as we must have done had you been what you pretended and you had resisted. We meant to do no harm."

"Is it no harm to rob a vessel?" asked the young man.

“That was our business,” replied the chief.

“And mine to capture and hand you over to officers.”

“They will behead us, and we do not deserve that. If we had better business we would not have engaged in this. Why kill men for doing the best they can to support their families? No father will allow his children to starve with food in sight.”

“Nor allow his children’s property to be taken if he can capture the thieves.”

“Your father had plenty.”

“How long would he have kept it had you and your crew had your way?”

“Is it right for some to have all, others none?”

“Is it right to take without giving something in return?”

“What if you have nothing to give?”

“That is your difficulty, not mine.”

“Remember that we have friends who will avenge our death, if you give us over to mandarins here.”

“And follow you into the spirit world? I am willing to listen to prayer for mercy, not to threats.”

“Had you thrown every pirate into the water and seen that none appeared again, you would have done wiser than you have,” said a friend to Thean after he handed the pirates over to the officers in Amoy.

“Perhaps so. But what if their friends had heard

of it? It seems better to stop piracy and then use my influence to save the pirates."

"How?"

"The influence of a sewtsai is great. My plea for mercy will not be unheeded. Then I shall make the pirates and their friends my own friends."

To the astonishment of all, the pirates were neither beheaded nor put to death in any other way, though punished. When they were at last set free, they declared that beheading would have been an easier punishment; yet it is better to suffer and gain freedom than to die and not know what may follow.

Thean's capture of the pirates made him noted beyond his home. Old boatmen who sneered before at the sewtsai commander now said Amoy would some day be proud that he had been born there. Even friends of the prisoners declared that the young captain was obliged to save his father's property, and since he proved himself so merciful, not only in the capture but in pleading for his prisoners at the yamen, he deserved praise rather than blame.

Instead of returning to his studies, Thean asked to have charge of the passenger route almost ruined by pirates. For a short time he commanded a boat there, but one night, on his return from a trip, he was told that a stranger had called and would come again the next day to see him.

"I hope he comes from the governor at Foochow," said Mr. Lin. "I tried in vain, after you became a sewtsai, to persuade the mandarins here at Tong Wan and Chin Chew to commend you; they said that too many kujins and even chinsus are waiting for office. They urged that you are too young; and to gain influence for your appointment would cost a great deal of money. They wanted me to pay a great amount into their purses. I was willing to pay what is fair, no more."

"I wish to earn, not buy office, father," said Thean respectfully. "My time will come, and I would rather wait a few years than gain office that would be looked on by all as purchased."

The stranger proved to be from Foochow and connected with the governor's office. He asked Thean many questions, but gave little information in return. When about leaving, he said that the young man might be summoned to Foochow later; if so it would be wise to come at once.

The summons came and Thean went. After he had been carefully examined again by a prominent mandarin, he was offered official position, and bidden to return home and ask his parents' consent before he considered the appointment. Though he knew that his parents would be glad to have him a mandarin, he must, according to custom, respectfully ask permission

from his father and mother to enter the service of the government.

After getting permission, and spending a few days at home before leaving permanently for some unknown and perhaps distant field, Thean reached Foochow and was appointed a mandarin and directed to special service.

Before this appointment, mandarins sent word to Mr. Lin that there was some hope ; and if he would help to pay expenses, they might get Thean office. Though the boatman politely declined, they sent again and again ; and they had the impudence to send, even after Thean had received his appointment. They said that, since it had cost them so much to gain the necessary influence to get him an office, it was only fair that he or his relatives pay a share of the expense. To this the boatman replied that he would never forget their kindness ; and when they needed his influence, it was at their service ; but since they declined to assist, he had gained other help, and through that Thean had reached a government position.

After giving general directions, Thean's chief said that he must report to Captain Nee, an old sailor, and assist him in getting evidence against a band of pirates, supposed to live in a village between Foochow and Amoy. Then he added : —

“Foreigners have complained that pirates are hiding along the coast; but our own people say that it is simply a foreign trick to disturb honest men. I fear that they are more interested in the village and its business than in preserving peace with outside nations. So it will be necessary to find the best of proof, and then capture the robbers. If you cannot prove completely that the men are pirates, to arrest and punish them will be to arouse those who say that the government is favorable to foreigners; so to please them it will punish its own people.”

Thean found Captain Nee an honest, faithful old man who hated pirates and foreigners; nor was he sure which were worse. When the officers were consulting what to do, the older man said:—

“There is only one way to discover whether or not the men are pirates: we must send spies to them.”

“What if the spies become pirates? What if the pirates kill them? What if the pirates refuse to allow them to enter the village at all?” asked Thean.

“It is easy to ask a multitude of questions, more difficult to answer them. We have time for neither. We are appointed for business and must attend to it. Have you any plan?” replied the captain.

Thean gave one; as he explained he noticed the face of the captain change, and when he had finished the old man spoke with contempt.

“That is a foreign plan. We are officers of the Middle Kingdom, and do not copy barbarians. If you have nothing else to suggest we will send out spies at once.”

Spies were sent but did not return. A second company was ordered to visit the suspected village, nor did those men return. Then a third was despatched; these came back in a short time, and reported that they had been ordered to leave at once if they cared to escape arrest as pirates. The villagers said that piracies had been committed in that vicinity, and they had determined to arrest and punish every stranger who could not give a satisfactory account of himself.

“More must be done, or we shall hear again from foreigners,” said the chief to the two officers. “Cannot you try another plan?”

“Give me a small army, and I will attack and capture the whole village by night,” responded Captain Nee.

“But we need proof first that they are pirates,” said the chief.

The old man had plans, but none proved successful. He refused, however, to listen to any proposed by his associate, and finally Thean was summoned into the confidence of his chief. Said the superior:—

“Cannot you advise Captain Nee?”

“He refuses to listen,” was the answer.

“What is your plan?” asked the chief, after further consultation. When told he added, “That will not do. You must think of something else.”

“I have proposed many others, but the captain declines to attempt anything that seems at all like foreign methods. He hates foreigners.”

“Then try what is unlike the method of any nation.”

“But he wishes only such as have proven acceptable to the Middle Kingdom.”

“We must discover and capture those pirates, no matter what the method be,” said the chief, after long discussion.

“Will you allow me to try something that will show their character, and at the same time entrap them?”

“Yes, anything.”

Thean suggested another plan; and after his chief had objected to some parts, the young man was given permission to try it, but was told that he must keep everything secret. For that reason he was given leave of absence for a short time, and the old captain continued his useless efforts.

For a day or two Thean appeared at Amoy, and then disappeared, no one knew where. Instead, a venerable man, wearing a full, long, white beard, was seen in charge of an ocean junk bought for him by Mr. Lin.

Workmen were employed on the vessel to make alterations, but no man was allowed to go ashore, nor any to come on board, except two who had the old gentleman's confidence. Whatever other changes were made, a remarkable one appeared to all. The sides of the junk were raised so that it was impossible to climb over them from an ordinary boat without the aid of a ladder.

Mr. Lin replied to questions that he knew nothing about the old man, beyond the facts that he was rich, and proposed carrying his wealth and large family to a foreign country, where he could live safely and at less cost than in China. He said that since the old man had paid him liberally for work and workmen, he could not say anything against him, though he knew little beyond what was told.

Reports of the strange old man and his queer vessel spread far and rapidly. Imagination added to those reports, until even Mr. Lin did not know them.

The day before sailing, the junk took a cargo aboard, and at night a large number of women. These were said to be wives and servants of the old man. The workmen remained on the vessel as crew. It was said that they were too few to manage such a large junk, yet the owner refused to take more for fear that they would rob him.

Had any one stepped on board the queer vessel, he

would have wondered what had become of the women and the old man. The clothing of women and dress and beard of an old man below would have told that the men had come on board in disguise, and that Thean, now in command as the junk sailed out of Amoy northward, and the venerable owner were the same.

Sailing before the southwest monsoon, the junk in time came opposite the pirate village, and there her halyard gave way and the mainsail came down on a run. With only the small sails on bow and stern, slow progress was made, and Thean, changing his course, ran near the village and came to anchor.

A boat was sent ashore to buy, or hire the villagers to make, a new rope. The sailors told a sad story of cruel treatment, and said that the old owner was too mean to furnish good or even sufficient food, and that he had refused to take along any extra supplies for time of need. They advised the villagers to make the rope, but to take a long time for the work, and then charge an enormous price; and added that they would be pleased to see the stingy old man lose half of his money.

The rope was promised on condition that the crew came ashore to help, and the fishermen be allowed time to attend to nets toward night. The boat that went with these terms to the junk returned with sev-

eral of the crew — “ all who could be spared ” — and brought back word that the old man wanted to get off as soon as possible, and would pay more for the rope, if on board before sundown, than the men could make by a month of fishing.

“ Make him wait,” said the leader of the crew. “ We can easily work by moonlight to-night; and it will be all right if he gets off by midnight. We are in no hurry, and he cannot hasten us now.”

Instead of beginning the rope, the villagers prepared a feast and invited the boat’s crew to share in it. At the end of the dinner no one was in a hurry to work; so it was late in the afternoon before rope-making was started. Soon after beginning work, which was carried on back of a hill hiding the sea, all the men and boys, except a few very venerable men and young lads, left to attend, as they said, to their nets.

As night approached Thean watched the shore closely, and not in vain. Just after sunset two large boats, filled with men and boys, pushed off and set sail for the junk. At once the sails and anchor of the latter were hoisted, and she put out to sea. Without the great mainsail her progress was slow, and the smaller craft gained. Coming in hailing distance, the commander of one shouted to the junk to heave to. This command and another, more emphatic, being

ignored, the pirate leader shouted that if the junk did not stop and take the rope and crew aboard the men in the boats would fire at it. This brought Thean, appearing as an old man, in sight. He asked what was wanted.

“We want you to take your crew and the rope, and pay for our work,” was the answer.

“My crew must bring the boat before they come on board. And, as for the rope, they will bring that in the boat and pay for it, too ; they have the money.”

“Stop at once or we shall fire on you !” was the response.

“Why trouble an old man, on a voyage, with property and family, to another country ?” asked Thean.

“Because we do not intend that you take money away from the Middle Kingdom. Stop at once or we fire !”

The junk kept on, and several musket balls struck her stern and sides, piercing a short distance into the wood of the stern, but glancing from the sides. No harm was done ; yet the junk had been fired on, and Thean’s manner changed. Looking over the stern, he asked :—

“Why do you wish us to stop ?”

“We mean to come aboard and prevent your carrying money away from the Middle Kingdom.”

The boats were near now, and crews could easily

have boarded the junk, had it been possible to get over the high sides. The pirates saw that they must gain the confidence of the old man, or fail to get aboard to capture the vessel.

“Will you let me go if I pay you a part of the money I have with me?” asked Thean.

After some bargaining the pirates agreed to let the junk go with rope and crew, on condition that half of all the old man’s property be given the villagers; for their share the rascals were to trust to the old man’s honesty; only he must bring everything on deck and in sight.

“I have a high, narrow platform running across from one side to the gangway on the other side. On that you may stand and see by moonlight every package brought on deck, and choose your half. But, as my wives and servants have been taught to shoot, I shall have them armed with loaded guns to shoot each one of you who dares to come to the deck. Remain on the platform, and what you ask for shall be handed to you,” said Thean.

The pirates were forced to accept this condition before the gangway was opened and ladders let down. Then, fastening their boats to the junk, they hurried up and took their places on the narrow platform. To their surprise they saw, on the deck, a line of women armed with guns standing on the right and

another on the left side of the narrow, bridge-like structure on which they stood. The pirates occupied nearly the whole of this.

Lest the rascals grow alarmed, Thean had some men at work carrying bags of what seemed silver to the deck, and handed one to the fellows on the bridge as another was laid aside for its owner. The clink of silver and the heavy bags of precious metal handed to one after another of the waiting men made them forget danger. This forgetfulness did not last.

Suddenly, and without warning, the bridge gave way in the middle while remaining fast at the ends, and along two steep, smooth planes all but seven of the pirates slipped swiftly down into the dark, open hold. There they tumbled in a mass, yelling and shrieking in rage and terror, but helpless. The top of the hold was beyond reach; and before they could climb up by any help, the hatches were closed and they prisoners. Caught in a trap!

Seven, five men and two boys, had saved themselves, by clinging to the deck or high bulwarks, from sliding down with their comrades. Before the yells of those below had ceased, these seven—three in one, four in the other boat—had cut the lines and were making every effort to get away from the junk. Though ordered to stop as soon as their escape was noticed in the confusion, they answered

nothing, but, with oars and sail, kept on their way to the shore.

The junk started in pursuit ; but, with small sails only, could not overtake the fugitives. To the amazement of the escaping rascals, the great mainsail arose to the mast, and the junk, dashing the spray from her bow, rushed swiftly after them.

“ Shall we fire ? ” asked several of Thean’s crew, standing on the bow, as the smaller vessels came within gunshot.

“ No ; we will capture each man unharmed,” was the reply.

The junk passed the boats, and then, with head to the wind, directly in their way, stopped them. But the pirates saw more hope in efforts to escape than in surrender. The command to stop and come alongside was unheeded.

“ Come alongside, or we will shoot you ! ” shouted a voice from the junk, the second time.

The only response to this from the men in the flying vessels was greater effort to get away, as the two separated.

The pursuit began anew, the junk heading directly for a fugitive ; nor could the men in their excitement escape being run down. Just in time to save themselves, they begged for mercy and promised to come alongside.

The larger craft turned to the wind and received the boat and its crew. The men were quickly sent to share the captivity of their comrades, while their vessel was fastened astern; and the remaining rascals were followed. They were soon overhauled and compelled to surrender too.

With every man and boy a captive in the hold, with the two boats towing astern, Thean returned to the village. No time was lost in pulling ashore with both boats and crews large enough to meet any resistance. None was offered.

Only old men, women, and children waited on the shore for the return of friends. Not until the crew of the junk leaped ashore, and made every man, woman, and child a prisoner, did they suspect that their relatives had been captured. The piteous cries of the women were heartrending, but the old men were silent. They saw that they had been caught by those more shrewd than themselves, and nothing remained for them but submission to their fate.

The next morning Thean left old men, women, and children at the village and, taking all who had attempted to capture his junk, started for Foochow.

Without the death or even wounding of a single member of his crew he had captured every pirate of the village. And this had been done without wounding a solitary rascal, except as they were bruised by

their unceremonious descent into the hold. And what was the more satisfying, he had captured them in an act of piracy.

Captain Nee was pleased at the success of his young colleague, even though it proved Thean shrewder than himself. The old man was amazed to find among the pirates some of the spies he had sent to discover the rascals. The others were never discovered, and had probably been murdered by the men they had sought to bring to justice.

CHAPTER XXI.

FOREIGNERS.

FROM early childhood Thean heard much against, little in favor of foreigners; and that little was spoken by his father. The boatman said that foreigners always treated him kindly, and were honest and fair, and they had led him to start in business for himself; so he had no reason to speak ill of them.

“ You have seen only one side of foreigners,” said old Mrs. Lin to her son. “ Wait until you see both; then you will hate them as much as others do.”

When a mere child Thean heard an old priest at the temple speak against foreigners in the strongest terms. The boy and his grandmother had worshiped at the temple, and were about leaving, when the priest was prompted, by a remark of the old lady, to say:—

“ If a change does not come soon I fear for the future of the Middle Kingdom. Men seldom come here, except to gamble or watch play actors. Only women bring children here to worship now; by and by they too will forsake the gods of their ancestors. Already boys are following the ways of fathers rather than mothers; and as they grow up they forget the temples.”

“ Why is it so ? ” asked Mrs. Lin.

“ Our mandarins and leading men cause much of this indifference, and foreigners the rest.”

“ Why do not mandarins worship the gods ? ” asked the old lady.

“ I cannot answer. But I can tell what they do toward gods’ priests and temples. They mock at the gods, ridicule priests, and treat temples with contempt. They say that we are of no use except to frighten the common people, and keep them from forgetting law and everything else but self. Men and boys listen to the great men, and of course copy them. These will by and by turn wives and daughters against us ; and then the gods, temples, and priests must depart.”

“ Never ! ” said Mrs. Lin emphatically. “ But what have foreigners to do with our gods, temples, or priests ? ”

“ They have no gods of their own ; and, since they have plenty of money, people believe that gods are unnecessary.”

“ Foreigners no gods ! I thought they had, and heard that they try to compel us to accept them rather than remain faithful to our own.”

“ Perhaps a few have gods ; and they come here to teach our people to accept those rather than the better ones worshiped for untold ages by our fathers. But

foreigners, except the few priests, do not worship if they have any gods."

" Yet they have a worship hall on Kolongsu for foreigners, have they not?"

" True; but few except priests attend; and they only once or twice every seventh day. Possibly the priests and their families do attend an evening beside during the seven days. The remainder of foreigners have only one god, and that is *money*. If they worship anything else in their own country, they forget it when they come to ours."

" Why should foreigners be allowed to remain and lead astray the people of the Middle Kingdom?" asked Mrs. Lin.

" That is a question we often ask. I think this is the right answer. The gods have allowed them to come as a punishment and plague to our nation. We allowed them to come because they buy our teas and silks and other products, little thinking that they bring what curses our people and will ruin our nation."

" Why need we sell to them or allow a foreigner to enter our country? It only leaves less for our own people and increases the price, so that the poor cannot buy."

" True; but the increase of price is what our rich men desire. It adds to their wealth. What care they

for the poor? They think but of gain. They would even sell the poor if it added to their riches. For gain they allow foreigners to come, little thinking that some day they will be the very ones to lose all at foreign hands. They think now that at any time they can drive out the barbarian; but he is gaining power and taking hold more firmly, so when they seek to be rid of him, he will simply get rid of them."

"But you said that the gods allowed, and now that the wealthy do. How do you explain?"

"Because the rich and great care more for gain than for gods, the gods allow them to have their way. They allow them to admit their worst foes, that they may learn a lesson of wisdom."

"Then you think the lesson will be learned and good will result in the end?"

"I wish it were so. But I fear that men will not learn. They are caring less and less for gods, more and more for themselves, and the gods will finally grow angry and refuse to listen to any prayer. They will be unwilling to remain in a country where they are neglected, insulted, and despised. Then will come calamities such as have not even been foretold."

"But the spirits of the dead will remain to protect."

"You little know what calamities must follow the departure of the gods. When they go, temples will

be useless and priests must forsake their calling. Then the people will have none to teach, none to pray for them. Nor would it be of any use. Forsaken of the gods, our country must go to ruin and our race die out. Who, then, will care for the spirits? Unfed, uncared for, do you think they will protect a dying people who disregard them? But that is not the worst. By that time your spirit and mine will be in the unseen world; and who will feed, clothe, and give us drink? Nobody. We must wander forever, homeless, naked, hungry, thirsty, feavered, famished, dying, but never dead. This land, deserted of gods, its people dying or dead, will become the home of demons. They will laugh and leap in their glee as they behold our sufferings. They will mock our starving spirits and ridicule our agony, as they behold us coming back each year seeking food and drink, to find nothing prepared for us."

"But will not the gods return when they see the remnant humble and penitent? Surely they will not refuse to come at the cry of some who are so unwilling to have them go."

"If the followers of the gods live longer than the foes, then the gods may return. But who knows that they will? No; I fear that men, learning foreign ways, will all forsake the gods before they die, and none remain to know, much less turn back, to the

deities whom the fathers worshiped. I see a sad future," continued the old priest, closing his eyes as if in a vision. "The gods, hiding themselves behind clouds, are silent, sad, heartbroken, as they look tearfully down upon the land they loved. Too sorrowful to speak, they mourn in silence forever over the dreadful fate that has befallen a people who refused their care and turned from their love. They behold the sun now and then breaking through clouds, shining on a land whose flowers have faded, never to bloom again, and fruits decayed without leaving seed behind; they see the dry beds of streams whose waters long since ceased to flow, and dead trees from which birds have flown forever. The music of song-bird and chirp of insect have died out ages ago and shall never be heard again. Above this earth gods will weep in silence, while on its surface demons dance and over the graves of the faithful will hold their feasts of evil. But the vision is too sad, too dreadful. I can say no more."

Thean was too young to understand the full meaning of the priest, yet the serious look of the old man and the anxious face of the grandmother made a lasting impression on the mind of the child. Nor could he help thinking that foreigners had something to do with a dreadful fate coming to his nation. Had not his father's words and the kindness and attention of

ship captains prevented, the youth might have become a foe to foreigners, as bitter and determined as any in China. His trip north showed that they were far better than his countrymen believed, and he was ready later in school to take the side of foreigners. Even when he saw how unpopular it was, he insisted that they were not what his fellows declared. The teacher overheard a discussion between Thean and a fellow student and, taking the side of the other, he said to Thean:—

“It is true that foreigners bring money and give business, but remember that they take more money and business away than they give. The Middle Kingdom is becoming poorer each year because of their presence. Many years ago junks did our carrying trade; where are our junks now? While a few remain, their owners growing poorer each year, the many are rotting on the mud flats or have been torn in pieces because there was no business for them.”

“Owners of junks have bought and are running foreign-built vessels,” replied Thean.

“Yes; the old hulks, too slow and old for foreigners, are sold at enormous prices to our people. But what man of the Middle Kingdom in Amoy owns a new foreign-built vessel? Do you know of any? I do not. Foreigners will not sell them.”

“They will sell if our people pay enough,” answered

Thean. "Foreigners are ready to sell anything for a sufficient price."

"You are right. They will sell all they have if they get enough money," spoke a student.

"Did you ever hear of one selling his life for money?" asked Thean. "But many in our country do, and for a small price at that."

"Who own the steamers that carry all the passengers and most of the freight along our coast?" asked the teacher. "Who own and make the money from many of the river boats in other ports? Foreigners."

"Not all," retorted Thean, respectfully but decidedly. "Already our own people are becoming partners and owning more and more of those vessels. By and by they will own steamers and control the business of the Middle Kingdom. Foreigners are simply showing us how; and when we learn we will take the business, for we can conduct it for far less than they can. We need not pay as large salaries nor demand as high prices. Then we will take the business to ourselves. We are merely paying the price of our schooling."

"Who compelled us to have custom houses? Who compelled our government to buy foreign men-of-war?" asked the teacher, taking no notice of Thean's statements. "And they made us pay enormous prices for the vessels. But who command them? Foreigners. For that we must pay enormous salaries. Who manage

our custom houses? Foreigners. Again we pay immense salaries. Do Middle Kingdom men have none of the offices? Yes, many; but those only that have hard work and small pay."

"Foreigners have brought much good to the Middle Kingdom," responded Thean, when the teacher looked to him as if for an answer. "Who was it that broke the power of the Tai Ping rebellion? Foreigners. Had it not been for their discipline and weapons the present government would have given way to that of rebels."

"Yes; and who first taught the rebels to begin the rebellion?" asked a student. "Foreigners."

"And who caused the sorrow of our country?" asked another. "Who brought opium here? Foreigners! That is enough to pay for all the good they ever did."

"I admit it is a crime of which the meanest of nations should be ashamed, and I know that foreigners are more ashamed of it than we. But it was not the purpose of all of them, as it is not the wish of one in a hundred now, that our kingdom be cursed with that plague. I have heard foreigners speak again and again with sorrow and shame of the opium traffic, and know that, if it were in the power of the great majority to remove that curse, it would not remain a day longer. We must not forget that many foreign nations trade here, and one only forced opium on us."

“One only!” said the teacher in astonishment. “Have you forgotten that all foreign nations combined to fight our kingdom when one engaged in war? They may differ when any selfish purpose is to be carried out, but unite always if we oppose. You young men will learn, and at no distant day, that foreigners mean to control the Middle Kingdom. Each move reveals that. Each effort ends in their gaining greater power and position. A few decades ago we had not a port where they were allowed. Then a few ports were opened, later more, and now see where foreigners make their homes. What province, what city of importance, has not some foreign merchant or priest of their religion living there? You will see the day when you must decide whether foreigners are to rule or be buried here. They have come to remain, and the Middle Kingdom must decide before many years how they shall remain.”

Thean found a venerable friend of his father at the house on his return from school, and told the discussion to him and Mr. Lin. Said the old man:—

“Your teacher and companions were right. Foreigners are the curse of our country. They are dishonest, and teach us to be. They compel us to accept the lowest prices, and then we must, in some way, regain the money lost by their avarice. I have not been a merchant all my life without knowing thoroughly their ways.”

“ My venerable friend will allow me to ask if there was no dishonesty in the Middle Kingdom before foreigners came ? ” asked Thean. “ The learned men of the past declare there was.”

“ Undoubtedly there was ; but foreigners have increased it,” answered the old man. “ They tell us that prices have declined, that our samples are better than the goods, the weight is short, and in every possible way take advantage of us.”

“ Are all foreigners dishonest ? ” asked Thean. “ I was told only a few days ago that the ——— ” (naming a prominent business firm of foreigners) “ is honest always. Have you ever dealt with that house ? ”

“ No ; but I am certain that it is like the others. Only a few days ago I heard of their dishonesty,” replied the old man.

“ If my venerable friend will allow, let me say that a man was discharged from that very firm a few days ago because he had cheated one of our people. The head of the house said that he would not employ dishonest clerks,” spoke Mr. Lin.

“ Perhaps that firm is an exception. But there are few like it. Not only are foreigners dishonest, they are brutal. We know that few have wives here, though doubtless they have at home. Here they take Middle Kingdom women, not as wives but concubines. When they return home they leave these and their children

behind, just as brutes do. And yet they call us half civilized. You think foreigners honest. Have you ever asked yourself who own the best sites in Amoy and on Kolongsu? Foreigners. And it is the same in other ports. But how did they get those sites? They say by purchase. True, but after bullying the owners and compelling them to sell, they oblige us to yield to their every wish."

"Not in all cases," replied Thean respectfully. "I know that several owners were glad to get the large price offered by foreigners. I know that in more than one instance they compelled them to pay twice as much as one of our own people would have paid."

"That is right; they should pay enormous prices for all they get. They should be made to pay back here the fortunes won from our poor people. You speak in their favor, but forget how many millions of dollars they take away each year. Some day not far distant the Middle Kingdom will find its wealth held by foreigners. It may be well, for then we can, after getting their money, drive them away and take back the property."

"And yet you say they take all our money, and that they are dishonest. Would it be honest to rob them of what they have bought at an enormous price, and then drive them out of our country, or kill them in it?

Are not we proposing more dishonesty than they show?" asked the youth with spirit.

After he became a mandarin, Thean was forced to hear much against foreigners, and he often took up their cause. The officials could not forget the Tai Ping rebellion, and said that it was owing to foreign influence. They magnified every act of foreign governments, and declared all in league to destroy the Middle Kingdom that they might divide it.

"You must admit that every move of foreign governments has been forward, and in the line of conquest," said an older official to the young mandarin. "They began by forcing their opium on us. They made war and gained territory; some they hold to-day. With each war they have demanded additional privileges. They have made us pay the cost of war by demanding indemnity; and then to collect, forced us to have custom houses. That brought in more foreigners to take office and receive large salaries. They compelled us to build or purchase gunboats, officered by their own men, but paid by us. They have added port after port for the home of foreigners. Not content with that, they have compelled us to admit, and even protect from the hate and violence of an outraged people, the teachers who bring their religion here. And when our people justly refuse to allow their temples and worship, they compel us to punish

the unwilling citizens. Not only must we allow their religion, we must protect it, and protect those who are traitors to their own country and its gods, just as much as we do foreigners themselves. They simply compel our government to do their will and pay for their comforts. What care we for lighthouses? Yet their vessels coming here need them, and we must not only build and support but pay large salaries to foreigners to care for them. In everything our government, though it might refuse at first, has been forced to yield. Their purpose is evident; they mean to compel us to retreat step by step, until we have lost everything worth fighting for, and then they will seize the remainder and divide it among themselves."

"What can we do?" asked another, before Thean replied.

"Resist each demand to the utmost, and yield only when compelled; meanwhile prepare to dare and oppose them. We shall some day be able to regain our lost power and position, if we learn their methods, use their weapons and discipline."

"Would it not be better to imitate their methods of government and progress, and educate our people?" asked Thean meekly.

"What? Give up our own? Give up what the fathers handed down to us? Everything that has

made the Middle Kingdom so mighty and glorious in the past? Never! When we begin to copy foreigners, then must go our system of government, learning, everything. Then must go the stability of the government whose officers we are."

CHAPTER XXII.

FAMINE.

THEAN found himself a popular mandarin after he reached Foochow with the captured pirates. He was praised and promoted by those above him, but envied and disliked by some below. They seemed to think that he had wronged them by accepting promotion, and let him know that they did not mean to allow him to enjoy his honors without paying the penalty of promotion over them.

The young man endured their sneers and unkind words — they were unable to do more against him — but hoped for another place than at Foochow. What he wished was given. He was ordered north on special duty.

About the time he captured the pirates, a famine began in the Yellow River country, and multitudes of sufferers were dependent on charity for food. The government, always slow, was behind foreigners in caring for the suffering ; and when it did send relief it sent some men to distribute who were unworthy the name of human beings.

The reader will pardon the author for stopping to tell about the Yellow River, “China’s Sorrow,” as it

is often called. A swift stream and carrying an immense volume of water to the sea, it is probably the most dangerous river on earth. Gathering in its waters, far from the coast, a great amount of sand and clay, it carries this down to deposit it nearer the ocean. Thus its bed rises; and instead of digging out the channel, the Chinese raise the banks. So across the plain the Yellow River runs above the surface of the country, and in some places above the houses along its course. When the banks are broken, the result can be imagined rather than described. Such calamities are sadly frequent; and though usually the people succeed in controlling the water and confining it within the banks, terrible destruction is wrought before the river yields. Occasionally it tears for itself another channel and is allowed to keep its new course, while the old bed remains to dry up and produce pestilence. At least nine times during the past twenty-five centuries, Chinese historians say, the Yellow River has changed its course entirely, and entered the ocean by a different route.

Each flood, whether the river be forced back to its bed or not, is certain to be followed by a famine. The country is so crowded with people that the land can produce little more than enough to support the vast population; and one crop failure, even over a comparatively small part of country, causes want and suffering.

The great river had broken its banks and flooded the country, thus producing the famine. When the government listened to the appeal of its starving people, it ordered some of its meanest officers to distribute supplies. These men acted so selfishly, so brutally, that other officers determined to collect evidence against them, though unable to stop the rascality. Thean was chosen, as shrewd and trustworthy, to help in the work, and sent to the famine-stricken district.

He had already learned that there are honest, noble mandarins as well as mean and rascally ones. He knew too that the better men dare not do as they would, for lack of power. To make the attempt would be to lose what power they have, and perhaps add to the number of unworthy officers. Thean knew that he was counted among the faithful and honest, and that he would be expected to help their cause as well as that of humanity in his new position. Said the mandarin to whom he reported before entering the famine district:—

“ You have already received instructions. Remember you must serve under men who care more for self than for sufferers. They call foreigners who are feeding the needy ‘ foreign devils,’ but they have shown themselves more worthy the name, while the hated foreigners appear like angels. Though you must not allow anything to arouse suspicion, do your

utmost to relieve distress. Every cash held back will cost pain and anguish, perhaps death. The government can spare but little for relief; make that little go as far as possible. Taxes have not returned what was expected, nor has the sale of official titles brought in large sums, and benevolent people seem unable to do much for the sufferers. Do your best, and remember that while you watch others, you may be watched even more closely; yet it is for the good of your fellows, for the best interests of the Middle Kingdom, that you serve and may be called to suffer."

The young man, accompanied by a few servants, entered the famine district expecting to see distress, but not such as greeted him. On the border of the stricken country he met women and children whose husbands and fathers had gone to the mandarins to appeal for more help. When the poor creatures saw well-dressed travelers approach, for Thean did not appear as a mandarin, they threw themselves on their knees in the path, and, with famished faces and hungry cries, appealed in the single word:—

“ Mercy! mercy! mercy! mercy! mercy!”

The young man would not pass such suffering by without giving relief. But, before he could do anything, his eyes caught a glimpse of a number of children lying farther on along the path, evidently exhausted, perhaps dying of starvation. The sight

overwhelmed him, and he bowed his head, covering his face with his hands.

Seeing his distress, the women were silent and waited to see what he would do. But they beckoned the children, who had been behind them, to step forward. The weak, starved creatures stood before Thean when he uncovered his eyes. Seeing that his glance was toward them, they kneeled, and lifting their hands clasped imploringly toward the officer, begged for food. Their pale faces, hollow eyes, pinched cheeks, features that showed an age of suffering and want, formed a picture of misery such as he had never seen.

Thean turned away, as if he would drive from his mind that sad scene. He seemed to have looked on a group of ghosts, and their presence remained before his mind, though his eyes shut them out. Then he raised his head and looked over and beyond the starving beings. There the more dreadful sight of wasted, exhausted skeletons met his gaze.

The children, seeing the distress of the traveler, were silent too, and waited for him to speak, to act. Perhaps hunger mastered their purpose, and the women broke out in low wails for mercy, pity, food. Their voices, soft and low at first, rose louder and more shrill, until their cries were piercing. Their plea was: —

“ Mercy, food, pity, food ! food ! food ! food ! We starve ! we starve ! we starve ! we starve !”

When their voices were still again, Thean asked what the government had done for them. The answer was that a little rice, unhulled, had been distributed, and this had been cooked and eaten, hulls and all, but the last morsel had long since been devoured. While waiting for more they had tried to stay the cravings of hunger by gathering and eating the leaves of willow and other trees ; now they were too weak to climb, and few leaves fell. Their husbands and fathers had gone to plead with mandarins outside the famine district for help ; perhaps they would get relief. Until they returned would the good stranger give each only a morsel of food ?

“ Have the mandarins given you no money to buy food ? ” asked the young man.

“ They gave a little ; and, when we refused to share with those who brought it, they declared that they would not return, but instead would distribute to those who are more grateful. It was not ingratitude, but starvation that made us unwilling. Our children were dying, and could we share with those who had enough and to spare, while our own flesh and blood were perishing before our eyes ? ”

“ If you were near the yamen, would not your wants be supplied ? The mandarins cannot travel all over

the country to find you. Go back with me. I will give you some food, and lead you to the yamen, where supplies doubtless will be distributed."

"We cannot go back! We cannot go back! Our path is marked with the bodies of our loved ones! We cannot look into those starved faces! We want food that we may leave this awful place! We will never return to the Yellow River land! Though the spirits of our ancestors seek us in vain, we cannot go back. Give us food and let us escape."

These utterances, grouped together, but spoken by different ones, made Thean's heart grow faint. He wanted to go back himself. If he met such suffering at the borders, what must he meet in the midst of the famine-stricken region! But he must go forward. Perhaps he could relieve some distress; could he refuse? What was his comfort compared with the lives of tens of thousands!

Distributing all the food in his possession, and ordering a servant to hasten back with money to buy and bring more, the young man set forward amid the blessings of the wretched beings. What he saw later can neither be described nor imagined. It is enough to say that suffering, starvation, and death, in most horrible forms appeared, though less and less frequent as he passed on. If suffering was less, its effects were more. Dead and wasted bodies, some

decaying and poisoning the air, others too wasted to form food for decay, appeared ; no merciful hand had buried, no pitying fingers had covered even with the rags that lay by their side.

Ruins of village and city told of the force of the flood ; while in the wrecks of their homes lay the remains of those who had once owned them. Desolation and death ! It was a fearful journey, and Thean was glad when it ended and he was at his destination.

But suffering, because the supplies had saved wretches to endure more, appeared again. The scant supplies hardly sufficed to keep soul and body together.

The poor creatures had lost their property in the flood ; some had scarcely a garment for covering ; their only shelter was the sky, and bed the earth. The dreadful stench and pestilential air of the town forbade seeking shelter amid its ruins ; and their only protection from the heat of the sun was a friendly tree. In the open country they waited for supplies and starved ; waited and died.

Thean set to work at once, and showed such zeal that mandarins laughed, and asked what made him so active, when there was so little work.

“ I must do something to keep my mind from the dreadful suffering I have seen. Though able to do little here, it seems that I must do that little, and prevent, as far as possible, the suffering seen even here.”

“ You will be accustomed to it and forget all about the suffering in a day or two,” was the response. “ Suffering is the common lot of man, and the sooner we accustom ourselves to it the less trouble shall we have.”

“ We are not here as dead men, to ignore suffering, but as brothers to relieve it,” spoke Thean. “ By relieving we stop the pain of others, and hide from our own eyes scenes of sorrow. It is brutal to wish to witness suffering without feeling; cruel to be willing to permit it; selfish even to shut the eyes to it. We can only be manly and faithful to our duty by removing suffering, and bringing comfort and joy in its stead.”

“ You are young and new. We can afford to wait and even listen to your rebukes, without feeling hurt by them.”

The second day after Thean’s arrival money came for supplies. A portion was kept by the officials, and divided among themselves.

“ What is this for?” asked Thean, when he received his share.

“ To save you from such suffering as you behold around you,” was the reply.

“ There is no danger that I suffer as these poor wretches are suffering now,” replied the young man.

“ You are not half through with life; in fact, have only begun. You are young; we older. We advise,

from our experience, that you make preparation now for evil that may befall you suddenly later."

"But this money belongs to the sufferers," urged Thean.

"And they have received nearly all of it. You forget that we receive small salaries, are exposed to great dangers, and liable at any time to be removed from office. It is but just to ourselves that we prepare in time of prosperity for the day of adversity. What will you do when removed from office?"

"I do not expect to be removed."

"It is a true saying that youth sees no danger, fears no misfortune. Some day you will find foes mastering; and then will come a trial, degradation, removal, poverty, want. That is the experience of multitudes before us; doubtless will be the experience of many more. It may be ours. So we must prepare when we can."

"But our preparation for trouble seems to be adding to present trouble of others," said the young man, pointing to the victims of the famine.

"An officer must never compare common people with his own class. The common men will always be in difficulty. Save them from one and they plunge into another. It is as natural for them as it is for water to run down hill. Our first, our great thought must be to protect those who have learned enough to know what is for their good."

Thean hesitated.

“ Let me, as an old man, speak to the young brother,” said the eldest of the officials. Then, turning to Thean, he continued : “ You are right, not wise. No amount of care will end suffering ; it merely changes the kind endured by the common people. Since we cannot prevent, we must give more thought to ourselves. We are exposed to pestilence and death here. Our salaries are small ; our service may bring us into difficulty, for those who survive, or friends of the dead, will doubtless prefer charges against us. We are certain sooner or later to meet with trouble. Official life is brief. He who fails to care for himself in that short space proves his unwisdom. It is expected that we take a portion of money passing through our hands ; with that silent understanding we accept small salaries. Our superior officers took a share before this money reached us ; they expected us to take another ; so we expect those below us to divide again. Many of us felt as you do, at first ; but we thought the matter over carefully, and talked with men wiser than we, and all came to the same conclusion — that duty to ourselves demands that we divide this money, as we must divide suffering, with the common people. My advice to you is, that you accept this money and think the matter over carefully, with the money in your possession. Unless you differ from us greatly, you will decide as we did.”

Thean accepted the money, and made no special reply. To argue further would arouse suspicion and prevent his getting the knowledge for which he was sent on this mission. Though he accepted the money, he kept it apart from his own ; and, that none should suffer for what he received, he gave a like amount from his private funds to the sufferers, and shrewdly made each one sign a receipt for the amount thus given.

The young officer remained in the first station only a few days. He was ordered to another, many miles away, and placed in a more responsible position. With the order to change came a secret message to him, that he must be more careful not to arouse suspicions. He took the hint.

“ We are glad to find that you are willing to take your share of the money,” said an officer, after the young man had, without objection, accepted a portion of that sent to purchase supplies in the new station.

“ I do not like to accept, but what shall I do when higher mandarins take a share? I have money plenty of my own, so do not need this. In fact, I prefer to hand my share to the sufferers, but do not intend to be unlike my fellows.”

“ I feel as you do ; and, since you speak that way, let me tell you that many a starving wretch has slept better because I carried him and his family food after

dark. It mattered not to others, for the money came from my own pocket. Say nothing about it, for they did not trust me at first, and they feared you would be worse than I. You see an officer sent us word, as soon as it was known that you were coming here, that we must watch you. Throw them off their guard."

CHAPTER XXIII.

TRIED.

THEAN was changed once more, and by promotion placed in charge of a small supply station. There he spent his longest time of service during the famine, and there introduced reforms that might have saved multitudes had other mandarins adopted them. Before he came and at other places almost to the end of the dreadful season of suffering, the dead had been left unburied, to add pestilence to the calamities of flood and starvation. He ordered the dead buried.

Unable to take charge of the burial party, he intrusted it to an under officer. Ditches were dug and poor skeletons tumbled in without ceremony or consideration. Had they been dead dogs the bodies could not have been treated with more indifference. Some that had lain for weeks, perhaps months, others that were hardly cold in death were thrown together in the ditch, and piled up until near the surface of the ground ; then a few inches of earth was hastily thrown over the whole, and the poor forms left to rot. Even this was better than to leave the unburied corpses to lie where they had fallen, to decay and poison the air ; far better had humanity been shown in the burial.

A description condensed from that given by a missionary on the ground will give an idea of the methods of mandarins in furnishing supplies to the starving.

The men of a village that had received supplies, but later had been neglected if not forgotten, appealed to the nearest yamen for food. The request was respectful, though intensely earnest. The poor fellows were ordered home and told that they must expect nothing if they did not remain there. The government would not supply tramps. Expecting to receive food at their homes, the men returned with the good news that supplies or money would soon arrive.

The starving people waited several days in vain, and again a delegation visited the yamen to plead that supplies be hastened. Their appeal was answered gruffly, and they were ordered back at once to their village with the announcement that no supplies would be given any village whose men were running about and creating a riot. Because they had not waited patiently at home, the supplies had been withheld as a punishment. The poor fellows returned home in despair, saying that, since appeals were useless, they might as well remain in the village and die there.

At length scanty relief was sent, but it came too late for many. Death had been more merciful than mandarins.

In other instances different, though as trivial,

excuses for delay were given. These are a few: the man in charge was ill; the officer to attend to the matter could not walk so far; the sufferers had behaved badly; they had not shown gratitude for what had been given.

Relief promised was always delayed beyond time set; food was of inferior quality, often unfit for human beings. Money sent to officers for purchasing food was expended only in part for its object, the remainder pocketed by mandarins. Inferior food was purchased, and the difference between that and the price for what was good was retained by the purchaser.

To add to these facts would be merely to change the variety, not the character, of the story. If there were cases of humanity, unselfishness, and self-denial on the part of officials other than related here, the author never learned about them.

Thean's last station was near the home of a Protestant missionary, who was doing much to relieve the suffering. His work was so systematic and thorough that the young mandarin called on him to learn his methods. After the polite greetings were over, Thean asked whence the money came that passed through the missionary's hands.

“Foreigners give it,” was the reply. “My countrymen now in the Middle Kingdom, and many living at my home send it.”

"Why do they send it to a foreign land?" asked Thean.

"We serve a God who knows no difference between nations. He bids us care for all sufferers alike, since all belong to him and are in our charge."

"What pay do you get for this service?"

"Pay? Why, none. We teachers are paid a regular salary sufficient for our support. This work does not ordinarily belong to us, but wherever we see suffering we are commanded to relieve it if possible."

"And you receive no share of the money passing through your hands?"

"Indeed not. We must render a full report to those intrusting us with it, and we take pride in showing how each dollar is spent. Even were it otherwise we would despise ourselves, and be justly condemned by every one of our countrymen for taking a single dollar given to save the starving from death."

"But you might make a false report. How would they know?"

"Our God would know, and that is enough. Some day we must give our account to him, and we wish to present one that meets his approval. He sees and knows all we do."

"Yours is a remarkable God. Some day when I have time I wish to learn more about him."

Thean learned the methods of missionaries in caring for the sufferers, then he asked : —

“ How is it that you succeed in supplying more than we? Why do you work so much more efficiently? Do you have so many more poor and suffering in your country than we have? ”

“ No ; on the contrary, we never have such a famine as this, nor floods sweeping such multitudes to death. Not only is our country unlike yours, our government is different. But I need not speak of that now. If you were to do as we have done, you might reach many needy ones, and save more lives. We do not try to supply the wants of the people, we have not enough for that. We try, instead, to keep them from starving to death. If we accomplish that, in time they may get food in plenty. Learn exactly how many are to be fed in each village under your care, and then divide your supplies among them, so that each individual has an equal share, or children somewhat less, if small. Learn how many mouths are to be fed, and then see that each gets a full share each day, or each certain number of days. Be regular in distributing supplies. Further, learn who have some food and who have none, and give those who have none rather than those who have.”

“ But how can we learn that? ”

“ Direct men to make inquiry, and then go around

yourself disguised and learn whether or not you receive true reports. Keep a record of each house and family and act according to that. Give each family a ticket, calling for food according to the number of children and grown people in it; and if you take supplies to them or have them come to you, go according to that ticket. But be regular. If you furnish supplies each day or each five days, be sure to be there on time."

The young mandarin adopted the suggestion of the missionary, and though its success was all that could be asked for, the men under his charge objected and tried to force him to change back to the old careless methods. In reply Thean said to their protest:—

"I have been placed in charge of this station and expect to act according to my best judgment. If other stations prefer other methods, that is nothing to me, so long as mine succeed in relieving the greatest number possible. I have not accepted any portion of what has been committed to us, and have made sure that you do not. We are here to save life and relieve distress, not to care for our own comforts. If you prefer to care for yourselves, let me know, and I will ask our superior to recall you and send men who count their fellows worth saving."

While this speech had the desired effect, it made the men angry and gave what they regarded good reason

to complain of the “foreign mandarin,” as Thean was called.

Thean’s first was not his last visit to the home of the missionary. Though at first he called officially and to learn how to do his work more effectively, he called later to satisfy his own mind about the God of the foreigners. He became deeply interested in the character of Jesus Christ, and said that China never heard of such a God. Had the ancient people known about him, China must have blessed the world by showing mercy.

“I must soon leave,” said the missionary, “and wish to place those whom I have supplied under the care of some mandarin. If you will take charge of the money and supplies, I will gladly hand all over to you.”

“And gladly would I take charge, yet for reasons that need not be given, I think it best that another be intrusted with what you have still unused.”

Thean’s suggestion was followed, and the money and food intrusted to another mandarin, on the condition that he see that those who had been supplied by the missionary receive as long as any lasted or was needed.

At last the dreadful famine came to an end. Those who survived found work, raised crops, or moved away, and the mandarins, Thean among them, re-

ported that their work was ended. Before the officers who had charge of distributing supplies separated, the chief ones gave a feast and invited all who had shared in the work, among them several foreigners.

It was a grand dinner, and glowing reports were presented, telling how many had been saved by the relief companies. A darker statement was made, telling how many had perished; but, added to that, was the excuse that the famine was so great, so beyond what any had supposed, that the supplies failed to meet the wants. With more money or food at the disposal of those caring for the sufferers, there would have been no sad record at all. Chinese and foreigners were alike praised for their noble services, and declared to be sworn friends of the sufferer.

Nothing, however, was said of the contributions that failed to reach the needy. No reference whatever was made to rascality of officials; and the stranger might have supposed the millennium had really begun, and Chinese were engaged with foreigners in celebrating it. Though nothing was spoken of rascality at that dinner, the facts were presented later. Those facts compressed in a sentence are: that less than one half of the money given by the Chinese government for the famine sufferers reached them. In other words, officials and their servants robbed the sufferers of more than one half of the money sent by the Imperial government!

Nothing, of course, was said at the feast of the money that paid for the dinner. Had not mandarins been tried later for swindling the poor victims of the famine, there might never have been a statement made regarding that. When asked at the trial what right they had to appropriate funds for a feast, even though to show courtesy to foreigners, they declared that not a dollar of government money was used; instead, the feast had been paid for by that left in the hands of mandarins by a foreign missionary for relieving famine sufferers. The rascals had actually appropriated for a feast what had been intrusted to them for their perishing countrymen!

When his duties were ended, Thean reported to his chief and handed over his share of the stealings, with receipts for the money appropriated from his own private funds.

“What does all this mean?” asked the official.

The young mandarin explained by saying that he was obliged to take a share of the stealings, or be suspected as a spy, and then be unable to discover further rascality.

“You are wise,” responded the chief, “and I am glad that you have given this conclusive proof of your shrewdness and honesty. Already charges have been brought against you, by men suspecting your real character, saying that you had kept part of the money

appropriated to famine victims. They mean to prosecute those charges, and thus hope to prevent you making any against them. You have verified my judgment of you, and now we shall bring to justice men whom we have failed to punish before. Be careful; you have bitter foes, yet you have no less faithful, strong friends."

Before charges against his fellows, brought by the young mandarin, could be prosecuted, theirs against him were pressed. His trial came first.

When all the testimony against the young officer was in, there seemed little doubt of his guilt. Even his best friends feared that his would prove a hopeless defence. None except the chief knew of the receipts.

Asked to tell his story, Thean gave it in simple, earnest language and spirit, and admitted that he had accepted his share of the money, as the others had; but for every dollar so received, he had given another of his own for relieving distress. This was a surprise to the accusers. Thinking to defeat him yet, they demanded proof that he had done so. The mandarin who had acted in the same way was called on to testify. To his testimony, corroborating that of the accused, was the answer that the two had agreed to help each other. But when the receipts were produced, there was consternation among those who

meant to condemn Thean. This consternation became overwhelming when the young man's superior declared that the accused had not only handed him the receipts, but had turned over to him the money held back from the sufferers.

Thean was acquitted, and complimented for his shrewdness, as well as his honesty and interest in the victims of the famine. While friends were offering congratulations, all were surprised by the entrance of two strangers, who asked if the young mandarin had been convicted. Told that there had been a contrary result, they said they were glad to know it, for they had come to testify in his favor, but had been waylaid and held back by foes, or they would have been present before the trial began. Asked to tell their story, one said:—

“While their companions were gambling, he and another like him visited our homes and fed us, but forbade us to say a word about it. Had it not been for those two noble officers, all in our village would have been dead, instead of being alive and happy now.”

These men proved important witnesses at the trial that followed. Their appearance confounded friends of the other accused officials, who were trying to prevent a trial, and the case proceeded. Even then it was apparent that the guilty men had many strong friends who meant to prevent condemnation if pos-

sible. What might have been the result can hardly be told, had it not been for some secret information imparted to those most prominent in opposing justice. They were told that there was not only conclusive evidence of guilt, but guilt in higher circles than those of the accused. If they escaped, higher officials would be brought to trial; for this was not a matter in which a few mandarins, but the government itself, was interested.

A sudden change took place in the trial; instead of denying their guilt, the accused admitted that they had appropriated some money, and pleaded for mercy.

They were at once pronounced guilty, and yet sentence was delayed. Doubtless friends intended to compel light punishment. But again there was a surprise. Instead of mild punishment, the most severe was inflicted. There was degradation from office for the least guilty, and those most guilty were beheaded. But four were left in prison unsentenced. These were not only leaders but high officials. Their friends were not long left in doubt why they remained in prison, nor yet what would be their punishment. In a few days each of the two highest mandarins received a present of a silken cord, from the Emperor, it was said; and the next morning the two officials were dead. They had accepted the hint, and strangled themselves. The other two followed as suicides, when they learned of the silken

cord. Since they received no such hint, or present, they swallowed gold leaf.

“ Beware for yourself,” said the chief to Thean. “ Your foes are furious, because of the punishment of the men whom you accused. You had better ask for leave of absence and retire for a while. You know that enemies do not scruple about using poison. Yours may attempt your life thus.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

SORROW AT HOME.

HIS chief's warning alarmed Thean. Though no coward, he had no desire to die; surely not by the hand of an assassin, nor yet by poison. There was no special duty for him; he had served faithfully, been promoted and praised for what he had lately done, so might honorably ask leave of absence.

As his application was ready, he received a message from his father summoning him home, for his grandmother was ill and likely to die. She had requested to see her grandson before death closed her eyes, and begged him to come quickly.

Mandarins wishing to care for parents in their last days, or during prolonged illness, often seek leave of absence, occasionally resign. Such devotion to parents is regarded most noble, and the request is granted unless the officer be greatly needed in government service.

Instead of forwarding his request, Thean offered his resignation and gave as a reason that he wished to care for his aged grandmother who was ill, and likely to remain an invalid, if death did not remove her speedily. Without waiting for an answer he hurried

away to Amoy, requesting his chief to forward to his home the reply to the resignation.

Reaching home, Thean was admitted to his grandmother's room. She had heard and recognized his footsteps, and, when he entered, her dim eyes brightened, her face wore a look of delight, and she raised herself up in bed to welcome her favorite. Said she, as he approached :—

“ I knew you would come. I knew the gods would hear my prayer offered the last time I visited the temple. It seemed my last visit then; it has proven so. But you are here; my dim eyes behold your face once more. It is well.”

After the greeting, Thean sat down by her bed and told of his duties at the north, of the promotion and the praise; but not of the sorrow he had seen nor the dangers he had escaped.

“ It is a delight to have you home again. You will not leave me, will you? I must pass over before long, and, until I go, please remain. It will not be long. I feel death's work. He has broken band after band, and the last may snap at any moment. When I go I want you at my side. You are my first grandson; you have honored the name of Lin above all others; and you have ever been a faithful son to me. When my spirit passes into the unseen world, it will depend on you for food and comforts, and I know it will not want,” said the old lady in low voice.

“ My grandmother’s spirit shall never want for anything in the unseen world, if I can supply it,” answered Thean. “ But I hope it will be many years before she passes over.”

“ It will not be years, it may not be months, possibly it will not be days, before I shall need your care in the spirit world.”

Thean’s coming inspired the old lady, and she improved. But she never left her bed. Day after day the young man watched by her, talked to her, and was her chosen companion. Old Mrs. Lin seemed to prefer her grandson’s company, and the family were willing to have him take care of her. The day after Thean’s return his grandmother said, when the two were alone:—

“ I wish to tell what I have not dared mention to other members of the family. A few days ago, when I seemed to be dying, I had strange feelings, an awful experience. All about me grew dark, and I was alone, dreadfully alone. Even the gods seemed to have departed forever from the unknown land on whose borders my feet were treading. I tried to call for help, but my voice failed; I hoped to hear the voices of the gods, but an awful silence prevailed. What a joy came to my heart when light shone around me, and I was again on earth with my friends! But I must some day go, never to return; what shall I meet

there? Can you tell? I fear to enter again that gloomy land, for it is so dark, so lonely. If my grandson could only go along, I would not fear; but he must remain, for he is needed here. Perhaps it will not be as dark, and I may find the way. If so, I shall wait and watch for your coming. Do you suppose the gods dwell there, or in another than the world of spirits? Why did not they meet me, even though they live in another land? They know how faithful I have been to them; can it be that they forget me so soon? Only a month and a half ago I was at a temple, and prayed to be kept and led safely into the spirit world when my time came. And I offered great presents to the gods to induce them to hear my prayer. I meant to ask your mother to go to the temples to pray for me, but feared to say anything, lest your father and others say that it proves to be as has been prophesied by men, that the gods care no more at death for their friends than they do for their foes. I know that the gods are good, yet fail to understand why they forgot me. Can you explain? Will they care for me, or must I go alone into the dark land?"

"Grandmother, I have given the temples and gods little thought of late, for I have learned that we are worshiping the lesser ones and have neglected, until we have forgotten entirely in the Middle Kingdom, the greatest of all gods, Siong Te. When in the north I

heard about him, and bought a book — a wonderful book it is — telling all about him. Shall I read that book to you?"

"Any book telling about the gods, especially if it tell about the greatest, will please me now."

Thean had bought a Bible from the missionary. He had asked where he might learn more about Jesus, and, when directed to the Bible, he bought it and began to read. At first he read from curiosity, later because interested in the truth. By the time he reached Amoy, he had become deeply interested in the Scriptures.

Bringing the Bible, Thean told his grandmother that the great Siong Te had a Son, Yasaw, — Chinese for Jesus, — whom he had sent into the world to tell men how to find the way back to God and also to lead them back with him. Then, opening the Bible, he began reading from the fifth chapter of Matthew. He read slowly and gave his listener opportunity for questions and comments.

"Who is that Teacher?" asked the old lady after a few verses had been read. "He is wonderful."

"He is Jesus, the Son of Siong Te, the great God of whom I spoke."

"The Son of God on earth and teaching men! Surely that is the teaching of a great God," said she.

"Wonderful! wonderful! I never heard such

teaching before. Surely the Middle Kingdom has forgotten long ago, if it ever knew such laws," said she, when the command about resisting evil and borrowing were read.

"Who is that Father in heaven? Tell me about him," interrupted Mrs. Lin when Thean read about blessing enemies and becoming children of our Father in heaven.

"Listen, grandmother; it tells here."

Then he read that God makes the sun to shine on the evil and on the good.

"Why, that is heaven itself!" said the old lady in astonishment. "Then he is in heaven, and does what we say heaven does. And it says that we may become his children. Can I become his child? It is a difficult way: is it too late to begin, do you think?"

Nothing interested her as much as to hear about a heavenly Father, and she requested Thean to find and read everything it said in the book about him. When he read that our heavenly Father is more willing to give good things to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children, she interposed saying that he was a real Father, and the One she needed.

Reading the words of Jesus in the eleventh chapter, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye

shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," Thean was stopped at the close of the last sentence.

"Wait, I want to think about that. Read it again," said the grandmother.

He read it twice, and waited for her to bid him go on.

"Rest, yes, rest for my soul. That is what I have sought all these years; but I never found it. Never! never! I did not think how much I longed for rest until I became ill. To get that I must go to Jesus and take his yoke on me, and learn of him. Yoke—that means I must bow my neck to his will, and do his service. I understand that. Farmers expect oxen to do that, and then they care for them. But how shall I learn of him? Where is he? I want to find him. He understands such beings as I am; he will understand me at once. Why have I never learned before about that rest? Never did priest tell me nor did I hear about it from others."

These and like questions, not asked all at once, were answered by Thean as well as he was able. But *he* was only beginning to learn the truth, and mysteries to her were usually mysteries to him. Yet both learned, as day after day the young mandarin read and the two talked.

Thean had been at home ten days or more when he

was suddenly summoned to his grandmother's side "to see her die," it was said. The whole family was present, expecting each breath would be her last. Yet she rallied and grew better. In a day she was almost as strong as before the seeming approach of death. When alone with Thean she told him:—

"It seemed that I was going, never to return. And it was all dark, nor did any friend come at my call. I tried to call the gods, but they did not hear. Then I called Jesus; nor did he answer. Death is dreadful. I wish I were young again. I do not wish to go. I fear to enter again that dark country, for the border land cannot be half as terrible as farther on. Yet I must enter and dwell there. Do you know where the temple of Jesus is? Will you go to pray there, and ask him to meet and go with me into that gloomy country?"

"Grandmother, the book says that Siong Te, and of course his Son, do not dwell in temples made with hands. I think, since Siong Te is a spirit, according to the book, and everywhere present, we can ask right here and he will hear us."

"Do you think so? Can it be? That is too good to be true! What, pray while I am on my bed? I need not seek his temple? Need not go away at all? Can it be? Can it be? I will try. I will ask Him right here. But how? I do not know how to ask him."

“Grandmother, listen while I read. Oh, this is good! It is what you want!”

Then the young man read the twenty-third Psalm.

“But who is the Shepherd?” asked she.

He read the words of Jesus, “I am the good Shepherd,” and replied, “He is Jesus.”

“And he will be with me when I pass into that dark valley? Will he? Will he? Then I shall not fear. No; it will be well then.”

“Thean,” spoke the old lady one day, after a long silence, “you told me that the Siong Te of the book is a far greater God than the Siong Te whose temple is in Amoy. How did it happen that two such great gods received the same name?”

“Grandmother, Amoy has two gods, beside this great one, named Siong Te. If two, why not three, and this of whom I have read the greatest of the three? I can tell you what I think. This greatest Siong Te was neglected by our people. Then they forgot him and remembered only his name, which they gave to another lesser god. Then play actors took the lesser god as their own. Of course, since such low, degraded beings called the god they worshiped by that great name, the ancient noblemen declared that there must be two Siong Tes. But they forgot that there are really three, and that the greatest had been neglected by wicked men, so had departed.”

“ And where does he live now? ”

“ He lives in heaven, where he has always lived. And that is the reason why, in times of great need and trial, we all appeal to heaven and worship heaven. We have forgotten the great God, but not his home.”

“ Is that so? ”

“ I believe it, grandmother, though unable yet to prove it. But this book, and it is a very old one, is bringing back to us the knowledge lost by the great men of the past.”

“ Ah, my grandson, you are right; the past had better gods and everything else than we have. The learned men say so, and the sages declare it. And can it be that we are going back to the glorious past? I wish to live if that be so. More than all to live if such gods come back as the great Siong Te and his son Jesus.”

The reader may know that missionaries in the north of China call God “ Shin,” that is, Spirit, and those in the south “ Siong Te,” that is, Upper Ruler. There is reason to believe that the Chinese, thousands of years ago, worshiped only one God, and he the same who is worshiped by Jews and Christians to-day. But, as Paul shows in the first of the Epistle to the Romans, when they knew God they worshiped him not as God, so lost the knowledge of him and became idolaters.



THEAN AND HIS GRANDMOTHER.

“Thean,” said old Mrs. Lin some days after his return, “you read about the elders of the assembly praying with those who are sick. Who are those elders? Would those of Amoy do?”

“I fear not. They do not worship Siong Te. The elders meant are true worshipers of him.”

“I wish there were some in the Middle Kingdom; and yet would they come to pray with a sick old woman?”

“Why not, grandmother? This book says that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female; that is, all are alike in him.”

“What, women counted as much as men? Impossible!”

“But it is so. Jesus made much of women when on earth. He met them first when he arose from the grave, and bade them tell first of his resurrection.”

“That is strange. I remember you read about it only a day or two ago. He is wonderful. Why did the Middle Kingdom forget about Siong Te, the great God? How much it has lost!”

“Did you wish some one beside myself to pray with you, grandmother?”

“No; except to pray that I may recover. Perhaps if elders did I might get well; then I might tell other women of Jesus. I wish them to know.”

“Some day they will learn. Siong Te is coming

back to the Middle Kingdom and will never leave it again. I feel sure that it will not be many years before multitudes hear and rejoice."

"Thean, are there no priests of Jesus in the Middle Kingdom? Surely such a loving Saviour must send men to teach others about him. I wish I could meet and talk with one of his priests, or that you could and would tell me what he says."

"I think I can find one somewhere in the country, and will gladly ask him any questions you may give."

"I wish to know for certain if Jesus loves all, even old women who have sinned all their lives. I wish to know if he really makes happy hearts that love to think of him, or what it is. I feel sometimes, since you began reading from the good book, that I love this Jesus more than any of my relatives, and it seems to me that he fills my heart with peace."

Without telling his decision, Thean determined now to visit one of the missionaries of Amoy, even though he might be watched and possibly be charged with friendship to foreigners and their religion.

Walking by the missionary's home the young man saw and addressed the foreigner and entered into conversation. Without seeming to care to know the truth, he asked question after question until he had learned what his grandmother wished to know. Said he on returning home:—

“Grandmother, I met one of the priests of Siong Te in Amoy to-day and learned what you desire to know.”

“A priest of Siong Te in Amoy! And you did not bring him to see me?” interrupted the old lady.

“He comes from far away and I thought I would not trouble him to visit you, if he would but answer your questions through me. And he told me a great deal that I wished to know. He said that the book I have is true, and we must read and do just what it says, and we shall find joy and peace.”

The young man then told further of the love of God and his willingness to receive sinners. As he told the gospel story the young mandarin grew eloquent; his heart was full and he spoke of his own joy and peace. Interrupting him, the grandmother said:

“Yes, yes; you have heard from a real priest. You know, you know! But how good! how good! Siong Te loves me! Loves sinners! I did not know that I was such a sinner! It is true! Truth! truth! And he gave his only begotten Son to die for sinners! How much he loved! He loves all; then he loves me. Surely such a mighty God will not let me pass alone into the dark valley. It is all right! It is all right! How glad I am that you went north! I might never have learned that truth. I must have gone down into the dark alone. I am so glad that you met the priest. How I wish I might see him!

But no matter; I have his word, and better, have Siong Te's love. But, Thean, do other nations know about his love? Are they all in darkness too? Do none know of him?"

"Some know, grandmother. He is the God of the whole world; and some have never lost the knowledge of him. Others are learning; and the people in the north are learning. Had it not been so, I should never have heard nor seen this precious book."

"I am so glad that you heard. If you meet foreigners, you must tell them of this great God of the Middle Kingdom; and you must let all people of the Middle Kingdom know. Wonderful! wonderful! I don't fear to die now! Jesus will be with me! I know it! He promises, and he keeps his word. He says he will never leave nor forsake me. Oh, to think that such a God should love an old woman, and she a sinner! How was it that I forgot all about my sins? Surely I was asleep. Do all sleep thus? You must arouse them. Do your father and mother sleep thus? Do all the others of the family? Wake them; wake them!"

"Grandmother, you are too weak to speak thus. You are exhausted. Try to keep quiet and rest in the joy of having God's love."

Thean's caution came too late. The old lady had fainted and seemed to be dying. Hurrying away for

help, Thean soon returned to find his grandmother not dead, nor even unconscious. Yet she was too weak to speak. As the family stood around her she regained enough strength to gasp : —

“ Lift me up ! Lift my hand ! He is coming ! I want to take his hand ! Jesus ! Do you see him ? How beautiful ! How glorious ! He reaches out his hand to me, but I cannot quite reach it.”

The family looked at Thean, then at the old lady, wondering at her words, understanding little, and surmising that she was delirious. Her strength, exhausted by the effort to speak, returned after a few moments of silence. Then the grandmother, looking from one to the other and resting her eyes on Thean last, whispered : —

“ He has come ! He will take my hand and lead me through the dark valley. I shall fear no evil. He has my hand and is leading now. The darkness is going ; it is light ; so light. I am going ! Come ! He wants you all ! Tell them, Thean, about it. It is all light now.”

Then her hand, raised as if to take hold of another, dropped and her eyes closed. She lay quiet, breathing easily, and seemed unconscious for perhaps half an hour. Again her hand moved, and her lips showed that she was whispering. Thean stooped down to listen but failed to understand. He asked what she wished to say ; she replied in a low voice : —

“Has he gone? Will he return? O Thean, he is a wonderful God! Tell others about him! Tell all here! Tell foreigners, too!”

The young man had kept the fact from his grandmother that she was a Christian, and worshiping and trusting in the foreign God. Often he proposed telling, but fearing lest it would disturb her peace, he waited. Now he determined to wait no longer, and he stooped down and whispered that foreigners already know about and even worship Siong Te, and that he is their God. She replied earnestly:—

“No; he is not theirs, but the God of the Middle Kingdom; for he is my God, and ready to be the God of all. He is too good to make any difference between us and foreigners. If they know him, it is well, for he will love them too.”

“Does my venerable, excellent mother know me?” asked Mr. Lin, approaching the bed.

“Certainly I know my son,” was the response. “And I am glad to be able to tell him that he was right when he said that the gods of the Middle Kingdom, worshiped by me, are worthless. But he did not know about the great Siong Te who loves us all. The people have forgotten about him; but Thean has taught me, and he will teach you. Accept him and his Son Jesus, who died for all of us. How much he loved men! When I am gone Thean will tell you all

about him. He is my God, and has made me his child; me a poor sinful old woman! He is so good, and loves so much. He gives peace to my heart in this hour, and all is well. I am going with him when he comes for me."

These words, spoken slowly and at intervals, were not understood fully by the boatman; but he forbore to ask her meaning. He saw that his mother was very weak and becoming exhausted by each word she uttered.

For a few minutes the old lady lay quiet and silent, her eyes closed, her face smiling, and a look of perfect peace on her countenance. Then, opening her eyes, she seemed surprised to meet those around her. Beckoning to Thean she whispered:—

"Jesus is coming. I am too weak to walk, so he means to carry me, as though I were a child again. I am going with him now. My Saviour!"

Her eyes closed, her hands were raised for a moment and then dropped. A bright smile, a look of wonderful brightness spread over her face, and then she ceased to breathe. She seemed asleep; but the smile remained.

The Lins had never seen the like. But they had never before seen a Christian die. Nor did any but Thean know that the old lady had gone to be with Jesus.

CHAPTER XXV.

PIRATES.

NOT until after his grandmother's death did Thean hear about his resignation. Then a message from Pekin, said to be the emperor's, was placed in his hands at Amoy. This message commended his filial piety, and gave permission to remain at home and care for his aged relative, but said that he could not be spared from the service of the government. The emperor had learned of his ability and faithfulness, and was unwilling to lose such a devoted officer. Therefore, while the young mandarin might stay at Amoy for the present, he must be ready for duty at any time.

Thean knew that the emperor had neither sent nor ordered this message, probably had not even heard of him or his work ; yet this showed that some prominent officials at the capital knew and appreciated his services. Since he had been away from duty and danger so long, the young man thought less of the trouble, more of the attractions of office, and was not sorry that the resignation had not been accepted.

Thean was pleased, however, to remain at Amoy, since that would give him more opportunity to study

the Bible, and he might, when he wished it, have the help of a missionary. He little thought that he who had watched others would be watched himself. He hoped that, since he was off duty, his enemies would forget him. He did not think they knew before he did that his resignation had not been accepted, and that he would soon be in active service again.

The Chinese government has spies to watch the lesser officers, and others to watch the spies. The mandarins in turn watch all officers whose duties they do not fully know. Thus distrust prevails throughout the government. Though many officers serve their country faithfully and heartily, too many serve for what they can get rather than for what they can give.

Some time after his grandmother's death Thean was summoned to Foochow, to meet an officer in the confidence of the highest officials. Fearing that he must go on detective service again, the young mandarin was glad to find that, though wanted for special duty, he must help to discover pirates, not dishonest mandarins.

About the time of old Mrs. Lin's death Chinese ports and even foreign countries were startled by news of a bold piracy near the coast. The pirates had taken passage on a foreign coasting vessel that carried an unusual amount of gold and silver, and, when the steamer was well out at sea, had overpowered the crew and robbed her. The following account is con-

densed from reports in China papers shortly after the date of the piracy:—

While the captain and foreign passengers were at dinner below, they were startled by pistol shots on deck. A moment later shots entered the saloon, fortunately harming none, but frightening the unarmed passengers, who were forced to seek shelter. The captain, though without weapons, sprang up the stairway, but found the door bolted and himself a prisoner.

Suspecting pirates, he shouted to know what was wanted, and was told to come on deck and see. At his demand the door was opened, and he allowed to step out. The door was immediately bolted behind him, and then, though he had been promised safety, before he could defend himself, he was shot down and left to die where he fell. The door was again opened and the passengers bidden to come on deck. They dared not disobey; as each appeared he was ordered, with a cocked pistol at his head, to enter the captain's room. Though powerless to fight, the frightened foreigners did not forget the dying captain, and begged that they might carry his body along. This request was granted, and when all were in the room the door and windows were locked, and the rascals began to nail boards across to make the prisoners more secure.

Then, probably thinking of the valuables on the captives, the villains tore the boards from the door,

unlocked it, opened, and entered. Approaching the prisoners with cocked pistols, they demanded watches and money. One man refused to give up his property. The report of a pistol was the only further appeal. Then the murderer coolly took watch and money from the dead man's body. As no others dared resist, the robbery was soon ended. The door was locked again, boarding up completed, and the helpless captives left in their close prison, while the pirates turned their attention to the crew, cargo, and rooms of the passengers.

Every member of the crew was searched and robbed, the Chinese passengers stripped of their money, trunks broken open, cargo examined, and every valuable easily carried taken away.

As soon as they overpowered the crew the robbers changed the steamer's course and kept her moving in a circle, as if unwilling to go farther north. Shortly after darkness set in the captives heard shouting in the distance answered by those on board, and then the vessel was stopped. They heard, or thought they did, a boat come alongside, and men from it board the steamer. These doubtless were pirate comrades to take the rascals and their booty ashore. Before leaving the steamer the pirates broke holes in the small boats, put out the boiler fires, and left the vessel to drift as wind and tide carried her.

When it was certain that the pirates had left, a captive crawled through a window which he broke open, and released his companions. Then all sought the crew. Several were found locked up, others bound ; two officers and four sailors were wounded and powerless, and six were dead.

Those able to work started the fires and headed the steamer for the nearest port, where she arrived safely with her wounded and dead. It was a fact more suggestive than strange that only foreigners had been killed and wounded.

Thean had been summoned that he might assist in discovering and bringing this bold band to justice. Though spies had been sent out they had failed to find the pirates or learn anything about them, except that they were supposed to be living in several coast villages, and engaged in fishing, boating, and farming.

Various plans to find and capture the pirates were tried. It is enough that the successful one is described. This was in the charge of Thean, who had suggested it.

In company with two young mandarins on whom he could depend, and three most trusty members of his old crew, Thean sought the home of the pirates. Each took a village as his field of work ; each was given his instructions, and each ordered to report when he had anything of importance to tell the leader.

Though they tried, by pretending to be smugglers, members of bands of pirates driven from other parts of the country, and other methods, to win the confidence of men of doubtful character, they failed to discover a pirate, or anybody who knew that pirates had ever lived there. When nearly a month had been spent in vain efforts, Thean was rejoiced to have a visit from one of the boatmen. He had, in gambling, discovered a probable member of the band. The fellow had lost every cash, and was desperate. This was the boatman's opportunity. He related his success to his chief thus:—

“ He had not a cash with which to continue the game, leave alone buying rice; so I, pretending that I had lost all too, proposed that we take desperate measures to get money. When he asked what, I told him that I knew a man who had a scheme for making a great deal of money, if he could only get suitable help. We talked a long time before I would tell more. I said that only those who had proven themselves fitted for such work were wanted. He grew more and more interested, more and more talkative, and ended by telling that he had been a pirate. He did not say that he had anything to do with that robbery, but I believe he was one of the party. I said that I wanted to learn more before I let him know what the scheme is.”

After a great deal of pretended caution the pirate

was brought to Thean. The young mandarin said that he had commanded a pirate vessel in the north, but it had been captured by a foreign man-of-war. All the crew except himself had been taken prisoners, and he had escaped by jumping overboard and swimming to the shore. Since his vessel, crew, and property were gone, he must look for something else to do. Hearing about a band of pirates in the south, he had come down to discover, and, if possible, get them to help in a bold enterprise, sure to bring a great sum of money.

Thean gained the fellow's confidence, and then told the plan. That was to lie, with a junk load of trusty men, in the track of an American mail steamer; and, when it came in sight, to make a hole in the junk and shout for help. If taken on board, they would ask to sleep on deck; and in the night, with knives and pistols, would overpower and kill or bind the crew, lock the passengers in the cabin, and then rob the vessel. Since the American steamers carry large sums of money, and returning Chinese bring back to their native land many thousand dollars, he assured the man that there would be a fortune for each one engaged in the robbery.

“How would you get ashore?” asked the pirate.

“We could easily launch the steamer's boats and escape with our booty,” answered Thean.

“Or run her ashore, and get off,” spoke the listening boatman.

“Yes; or we could set her on fire and no one would know anything about what we did; for we could pretend that we were passengers and escaped in her boats,” said the pirate, eager to engage in the scheme.

“Now can you help me to get a crew?” asked Thean. “We must have many men.”

The pirate, delighted at the chance to make a fortune, and sure of the success of the scheme, replied that he could get all the men needed.

“We must have only those who have proven themselves capable of such work. Ordinary fishermen and sailors will not do,” said Thean.

“We need not take one who is not fitted for the work. The men with me when we captured the foreign steamer will be glad to go along, and each one is able to do his full share, and can be trusted in the work.”

“Can you get them?”

“Yes.”

“Every one? We shall need every man, and many beside, if capable.”

“I can get all but three. Those have been killed and robbed of their money.”

“Very well; get every one. We shall need all and many more good men if we can find them.”

"I can get four good and trusty men," said the boatman.

"If they are as good as you have shown yourself, we will take them too," responded Thean. "What we need is enough men; there will be plenty of money for all."

Before the pirate appeared with his comrades the boatman had brought and enlisted the four members of the party. These were present and heard the declaration of the rascals.

Thean pretended to doubt the character of the members of the band, and compelled each one to declare that he was on board the steamer, and tell what share he took in the piracy. Then, as he said, to assure himself that the statements were true, he questioned the others, after sending away the applicant, and thus learned the facts. Since the stories agreed in general, he did not doubt that he had many, if not all, of the band of villains; and even the testimony of each, sustained by the witness of his companions, as to the share every man had in the crimes.

When all had approved themselves, the leader urged that he needed more men, and tried to persuade them to find other members of the gang. They asserted that none remained alive. Since all insisted that this was true, and that they had now a larger company than were present when the steamer was captured, Thean resolved to wait no longer.

Now that he had the men under his control, the difficulty would be to get them far enough away to take them prisoners. To attempt to arrest them near their homes was too dangerous, even if the young officer had cared to do it. He wished to take them north.

“ It will not do to move north in such a large company. The mandarins will suspect and arrest us. We had better divide into small, say five, parties and travel by different routes, and all meet at the same place at a given time. Nor will it be safe for such a large company to be seen together even there. So, if you allow, I will hurry ahead, have a junk ready, and, as soon as you come, you may go aboard at once and so escape difficulty.”

This suggestion of the leader was accepted, and Thean hurried ahead. The junk was ready when the first party appeared ; and in due time the whole company was welcomed on board by Thean.

“ We will start by daybreak to-morrow, so go to sleep early to-night,” said the leader.

Before midnight a large company of soldiers surprised the sleeping pirates, captured and hurried them off to prison. Nor did they suspect that they had been caught by mandarins until the next day, when Thean and his five companions appeared as witnesses against them.

The trial was short but decisive. The pirates saw

that they had been deceived, duped, trapped, and gave up in despair. They said that the Fates were against them and waited for death. Nor did they wait long.

The Chinese government does not seem to think of the future of condemned prisoners, and sees no advantage to itself in allowing them many days of life after the trial; so execution speedily follows conviction. Perhaps officials reason that a dead rascal never escapes, never commits more crime, never gives further trouble; so they speedily transform a condemned into a dead criminal.

The day after their conviction, the pirates were led out to an execution ground, their hands bound, and they bidden to kneel with heads bowed forward. Thus the whole company awaited the executioner's heavy sword. With a single but furious blow he severed the head of the first from the body. Without waiting, he stepped to the second and the third, decapitating each in order. But the fourth, seeing the fate of his companions, could no longer seem indifferent. His cry of agony, as he tried to rise before the blow fell, "Spare life! Spare life!" would have reached the heart of any but a hardened executioner. The only answer to the poor fellow's appeal was the sword that speedily silenced his cry forever.

After this first plea for life, for mercy, others

begged, but begged in vain, that they might live. Soldiers in attendance forced the trembling culprits back to their knees, and watched by their side until the swordsman had made watching unnecessary.

Not until the last pirate head had fallen did the executioner cease his work. Then he and the soldiers turned away and left the bodies of the poor wretches to lie uncared for on the ground. They had done their work, and now was the opportunity for any who cared to show mercy. Nor was it mere heartlessness that left the bodies there. It is the purpose of the government to leave such object lessons before the people, that they may fear to disobey the laws and learn to dread its power.

Before night a few of the bodies were put in plain coffins, and the following day the remainder; then all were quietly carried away and buried. A man of wealth, anxious to win merit with the gods and spirits, paid for the coffins and the expense of burial. Had charity not done this, the government might have allowed the bodies to lie for days where they fell.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SETTLING DIFFICULTIES.

AFTER the trial of the pirates Thean was ordered north. Reaching his destination, he asked one of the mandarins about a difficulty of which he had heard on his way.

“The same old trouble between followers of the foreigners and those who oppose them,” was the answer. “We shall never hear the last of such difficulties until foreigners are driven from the Middle Kingdom. And the sooner that is done the better will it be for us.”

“Can we do it?” asked Thean.

“Why not? Did not this government overpower and destroy the Tai Piugs? Did not it meet and defeat the French? It is the oldest and largest nation, why should it not be able to drive out whom it will?”

“Simply because it has neither ships, soldiers, nor weapons equal to those of foreigners. Some day we may be able, but we are not now, to war successfully with one, let alone several foreign nations combined.”

“Ah, we should not war with all. We must fight one at a time.”

“ So we would, but they will not. We have tried that too often already.”

“ None joined with France.”

“ No ; because France began the difficulty. Yet, if we undertake to drive out one nation, all will unite to fight us.”

“ What if all unite? If we cannot fight them on the coast, we can inland. There we can send multitudes against them. What will they do when away from their ships? Were my advice followed, we would begin war and then leave the coast. That would tempt them away from vessels and guns. And there we would overwhelm them.”

“ What if they preferred to remain near the coast, and should occupy our cities as their own?”

“ We would soon drive them out with guns that could not be reached by their shot.”

“ In Amoy, for example, where would you place your guns beyond the reach of foreign shot and shell? How about the large rivers? They would speedily capture many of our best cities and hold them.”

“ But we could tempt them inland, and there starve their soldiers to death.”

“ And what would become of our own people meanwhile, who had occupied the country before foreigners took possession? Instead of starving to death, might not they simply hold the country as their own ; and

from that as a base make war upon and conquer the remainder of our land? We are not able to drive them out, so must treat them kindly and trade with them. That is all they ask."

"Yes; and let them take away our money and goods."

"They cannot well do both. They leave money for our goods, or goods for our money."

"It is well to talk; yet we must do something ere-long or have war among our own people."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that if the government does not fight foreigners it must fight rebels. There are many men in the Middle Kingdom determined that outside barbarians go. They do not intend to allow the country to be ruled by them, nor mean to permit them to force their religion on us."

"They do not force their religion; they simply teach its doctrines, and ask us to consider and accept them, after we are convinced that theirs are better than our own."

"You probably know nothing about their religion and teachers. We do in the north. Most horrible stories are told and believed about those teachers."

"Will you repeat a few?" asked Thean, smiling.

"They teach disloyalty to the government; they try to make wives unfaithful to their husbands; they

teach youth to despise age ; they steal young children and use their bodies, especially the eyes of the little ones, for medicine.”

“ Do you really believe any of those falsehoods ? ”

“ They are repeated so often by men who should know, that it is hard to disbelieve. Yet I have not told the worst. Indeed, no man who cares to speak decently dares repeat the filthy stories of their vileness.”

“ I know many foreigners, and have met their teachers ; in fact I speak their language, so know something about them, and I do not believe there is a particle of truth in those statements. Instead of teaching disloyalty, they declare that all must obey the government of the land in which they live ; and they are ever praising our devotion to the aged, and urging us to show the greatest respect to our parents. As for the vile stories, you may not know that our filthy, lazy, ignorant priests, who gain a living by deceit and rascality, originated those falsehoods. While false of foreign teachers, those stories would be true of many of our priests. As for stealing and making the bodies of children into medicine, let me assure you that not foreigners but doctors of our country make medicine of portions of the human body. You know that human nails, hair, and other portions of the body are used for medicine. You know that we have reason to despise our physicians, while we respect and trust

those from foreign lands. And do you suppose they would be guilty of those crimes? When we have no doctors to feed men tiger's flesh to make them bold, that of horses to make them strong, and of fowls to make them light, we may speak against physicians from abroad. And when our dentists cease to insert pegs, or, worse still, living maggots into aching teeth, and then pull out pegs or worms and show to their patients what hurt them, then we may have something to say against others."

A summons to the office of the chief took Thean away before the other could reply.

After welcoming him, the chief told the young officer of trouble that had arisen in the district, and what must be done to settle it. Then he added:—

"Because you are familiar with foreign ways, and can speak English, because you have proven yourself fearless and faithful, we thought best to have you take charge of the matter. The officers in this part of the country are too much opposed to foreigners, too much in sympathy with the popular prejudice, to deal fairly with both sides. Unless this opposition stops and difficulty is settled, we may have serious trouble with other nations. We are not ready for that. If it were alone with France, we would have less to fear; but Great Britain and America are not to be trifled with. You have a difficult task; yet, according to reports,

you are capable of performing it well. What further instruction you need ask of me, and if you require authority and the power of government it shall be given."

The trouble had begun years before between the foreign missionaries and two villages. French Catholics had established themselves in one, English Protestant missionaries in another. When chapels and schools were established and religious worship was regularly held the villagers grew indignant, and when convert after convert was made this indignation showed itself in threats, then acts of violence. Finally in the Catholic village there was a riot resulting in the destruction of the buildings used for mission work. The teachers were driven away and one Christian killed.

The missionaries demanded payment for damages, punishment for the rioters, the return of the teachers, and protection in the future. The mandarins promised much but did nothing. They professed great anxiety to have the difficulty settled, and regret at the delay; but words alone were used.

When foes of the Protestant mission in the other village saw that neither payment for damages had been made, nor punishment meted out, they grew bold and threatened to destroy every building occupied by foreigners, to drive out their religion, and compel

those who had forsaken to return to the religion of China. They did not stop with threats, but began to annoy and persecute Christians. Persecution increased until the missionaries complained to their consul; he quietly informed the mandarins that the treaty was not observed. This had no effect, so was followed by a dignified but firm demand that Christians be allowed to worship unmolested. Though the mandarins issued a proclamation to the people forbidding them to molest foreigners, it had no effect. The people knew that to be merely a matter of form. It was at this time that Thean came, and was directed to stop the persecution and restore order.

Without announcing his coming he visited the villages as a private citizen and a stranger. Without betraying his errand, he learned from both sides the state of affairs, and then left.

Two days later a proclamation was posted in various parts of the villages, warning the people not to interfere with foreigners engaged in lawful occupations, nor to hinder them in their worship. It further forbade interfering with Chinese who preferred to worship in other ways than those generally accepted by people of the Middle Kingdom. It said that foreigners had treaty rights in China; that disciples of foreign religions had similar rights, and that the government would see that those rights were observed. What

stung the people most was the closing portion of the proclamation. That declared that the Middle Kingdom was at peace with outside nations, and intended to remain so. It did not propose to allow rash or prejudiced men to involve it in war with them. And, to preserve peace, it must punish turbulent, riotous people, upon whom the severest punishment would fall.

This proclamation caused tremendous excitement. The people wondered what it meant, who had come into power. They could not mistake the meaning or spirit of the proclamation. Another surprise as unpleasant awaited the elders of the two villages.

Those from the Roman Catholic village were summoned to the yamen and met Thean. They were told that the time had come for a change ; the government did not intend to have war with foreign powers ; it was not able to cope with them, so meant to settle difficulties fairly and honorably. And it would begin with those who caused them.

Then the young officer told the elders that since their own village had done much toward starting war, they must begin now to ensure peace. This could only be done by permitting foreigners and the disciples of their religion to remain unmolested. If they did this in the future, there would probably come no trouble to their village, except that they would in all probability be compelled to pay damages and a sum of money for

the life of the man killed. But, if there occurred another riot or more persecution, punishment swift and severe must fall.

Almost breathless with amazement, the elders were dismissed. They were bewildered. Never before had they listened to such calm, dignified language from a mandarin when speaking about foreigners. Never before had they been shown their responsibility and warned of what would follow if they proved unfaithful. They could not help understanding that the new mandarin meant exactly what he said, and that he was speaking for those higher in authority. Seldom has a company of village elders gone from a Chinese yamen more disheartened than were those men.

The elders of the other village were next summoned to the yamen. Entering, they were welcomed by Thean and told that the government wished their services in preventing a foreign war. He said that outside nations are mighty, and in war, where the interests of all are concerned, would unite against the Middle Kingdom. Since that cannot fight all, it must not undertake to fight any. Then he added:—

“Though you have done much to prevent war, more remains to be done. You are to be congratulated that you destroyed no property, had no riot. Had one occurred, not only must you have paid the damages and suffered punishment, but you would have shown

to the foreigners that the treaty with them is not to be kept. Of course you are unwilling that foreigners bring their religion and lead your friends away from the gods of their fathers, yet what can you, what can we do? The government was forced to make a treaty allowing that. It is better to permit such worship than to fight. You need not worship foreign gods, nor have anything to do with them; and no one will compel you to go to any place of worship, whether it be in our own temples or foreign chapels. But, according to the treaty, we must allow our people to worship as they will, unmolested. Foreign nations stand like lions ready to spring upon us; but the treaty has bound them. If we break that, we let them loose; and who can tell what will be the result? The Middle Kingdom does not mean to break it, and means to prevent the people from making the attempt. Better sacrifice a few rioters first than lose a multitude of worthy citizens by allowing a riot. A riot may gratify you, yet remember that you must not only pay all damages but suffer punishment for causing them. It is much cheaper to submit to a little that is disagreeable, than to bring what is far worse by trying to remove that little. You were wise to prevent the destruction of property, but unwise in threatening. Beware! Threats may be carried out by others and punishment fall on you."

Order was restored, peace prevailed, persecution ceased, and Christians were unmolested.

Shortly after order had been restored a Protestant missionary called on Thean and thanked him for his services. He said that such judicious work would not be forgotten. He had served another and greater than the Chinese government, and obeyed a mightier Monarch than ruled in the Middle Kingdom. Such service would some day meet its deserved reward.

The French missionaries visited Thean and asked him, since he had been so successful in restoring order, to compel the villagers to pay for the damage done, and to rebuild the ruined houses. He replied that his instructions were to restore order and prevent future disturbance; nothing had been said about damages.

“Will you take charge of the matter if we persuade your chief to give it into your care?” asked the missionaries.

“I try to obey orders always,” was the answer.

Thean was ordered to settle the matter in the best possible way.

“There is only one way,” said he, “to settle; and that is to restore the buildings, or erect others as good, and to pay the relatives of the dead man a just compensation.”

“Will the foreigners settle in that way?” asked the

chief. "They demand a large sum of money for the life of the man, more still for their buildings, and dreadful punishment for every one engaged in the riot."

"Men usually demand more than they expect. If we meet them fairly and frankly, and promise that there shall be no further molestation, doubtless they will lessen greatly their demands," replied Thean.

Instead of appealing to the villagers, Thean sought the missionaries and learned their demands. Said he:—

"Would it not be better to demand what will be granted than to seek what you must fail to obtain? We admit that you have suffered wrong, yet do not admit that you shall visit us with another to right your own. You believe what your Master taught; why not show your faith in your practice?"

"What do you know about his teachings?" was asked.

In reply Thean quoted the words of Jesus about suffering from enemies.

"We do not propose to allow our rights, gained by treaty, to be trampled on without demanding the punishment of the guilty. We are Frenchmen as well as Christians."

"True; but one should mean the other. Though the Middle Kingdom has not such high and noble prin-

ples to guide it as you have, it intends to do right. The question, however, now is not so much of right, as it is of peace and harmony. The wronged should make concessions to win those who have done the injury. If you are willing to do that, I am sure we can settle this difficulty, and we may prevent any in the future."

The agreement was finally made that, if the villagers would rebuild the ruined structures, allow the teachers to return and work there unmolested, and then would pay the family of the dead man what was deemed a just amount by disinterested parties, all further claims should be abandoned.

When the village elders learned that they must rebuild the ruined houses, they were angry; but when told that they must allow the teachers to return and work unmolested, they were furious. They supposed they had already done all that would be required, when they allowed Christians to remain in the village and worship unmolested at home.

"Remember that this is not my trouble but yours," said Thean to them. "I am merely trying to help you settle it. If you refuse my services, you must stand between the highest officials, in fact, our government, and France. You know what follows when grain falls between millstones. Will it not be better to yield something than lose all? Though you gave cause for

war, the Middle Kingdom does not intend to allow war. It means to make the guilty, not the innocent, suffer. If you are wise, you will take this offer; if not, you will suffer for your passion before and your folly now."

Given time to consider, the men finally yielded and accepted the terms offered. The houses were rebuilt, leaders allowed to return and continue their work unmolested, and a satisfactory compensation was made the relatives of the dead man.

Murmurings against Thean, after the difficulty in the Protestant village was settled, became threats when the Catholics were satisfied. Common people joined with lesser mandarins in plotting the young officer's ruin. Too shrewd to make complaints against him until they had proof to convict, they sought witnesses.

Meanwhile Thean did his duty, paying no attention to the threats, if he heard them. He visited the villages and saw that order was preserved, and that chapel worship was undisturbed. His faithfulness, no less than his success, attracted the attention of superior officers; they commended his devotion, yet feared that he would be compelled later to suffer for it. Said one to him, after transacting business calling the young man into his superior's presence: —

" Beware that you do not seem too friendly with foreigners. You are aware that you have foes among

the people who have been obliged to pay for their folly. They blame you and they will watch that they may make some charge against you.”

“ I am not an enemy to foreigners, but am a friend to my own nation and people. Because anxious to serve my nation best, I have incurred the hatred of some of the people. Yet that is because they fail to understand, not because I did wrong.”

“ True ; yet your methods are like those of foreigners, rather than of our own kingdom.”

“ In what way ? ”

“ You go forward as if you cared not for friend or foe. You do not try to deceive, nor even to escape suspicion. You seem to forget yourself and your own interests.”

“ My interests are not to be compared with those of a whole nation.”

“ True ; yet you do not carry those of a nation. You bear only a small share of responsibility ; yet you alone must care for yourself.”

“ What do you mean ? ”

“ That the great cares belong to those higher than you in office ; while you should heed more your own welfare. Do your duty, but beware that you no not destroy yourself by so doing.”

“ Better destroy myself than allow the whole kingdom to reach destruction.”

“Perhaps you will destroy yourself, and yet do little to save the Middle Kingdom. Better to escape sacrifice to-day, that you may be the greater hero to-morrow.”

“By doing duty to-day, I may save the necessity for heroism to-morrow.”

Thean did not expect, nor did the friends who warned him most, that trouble would come so soon. Before he was sent to other duties, charges were brought against him, and he was suspended from office. The three principal charges were, that he had taken bribes, had turned against his own people and favored foreigners, and had acted as a spy for foreign nations.

Denial was useless. Friends tried in vain to prevent a trial. The accusations were too serious, testimony too strong, to be ignored. Though conscious of innocence, Thean knew that men determined to find testimony to convict another need but two things, plenty of money and plenty of influence. Enemies had money enough; the question was one of influence only.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TRIED AGAIN.

A N old mandarin called on Thean before the trial, and after complimenting the young officer on his faithfulness said :—

“ If all the young men in government service were as fearless as you, the older ones would have little anxiety for the future of the Middle Kingdom. Alas ! dishonesty is everywhere prevalent; and yet the few who wish to make the Middle Kingdom what once it was, dare not do their full duty. We are watched, misjudged, falsely reported, hated, and liable to be removed from office at any time. That but lessens the number of friends, and adds to the foes of the government. By attempting too much we accomplish nothing.”

For some time the old man talked on in this strain ; Thean meanwhile listening respectfully and wondering what was the real purpose of the visit. Chinese-like, that was made known just as the old officer proposed to leave. He spoke as if the thought had just entered his mind.

“ Have you not been too severe ? ” he asked. “ Would not our cause have gained more had you learned, yet waited ? ”

“What do you mean?” asked Thean.

“That you may have been too hasty, too severe. You have made enemies; they are bitter, and may compel us to lose your valuable services. Youth too often hastens and fails, while age delays and succeeds. The broad, deep foundation rises slowly but sustains mighty structures.”

“The dying patient cannot wait for slow remedies.”

“Yet he may drive his physician away and die the more quickly.”

“And he may take the remedy and be saved after his physician has departed.”

“But if he kill his physician and then dies, what good is done? If that physician had been more careful, both would have lived. It is to be feared that you have forced too much medicine on the patient, and he has determined to dismiss his physician.”

“He *has* dismissed me; but he may take my remedies later.”

“And he may frighten others so that they prescribe only what he demands, not what he needs. Do you mean that you have been dismissed from office?”

“Exactly; and now I must stand trial for what I have already done.”

“I fear for you, my young friend. It is as we all feared. You were too hasty, compelled too much. Since they have begun, they may not cease while you

remain within their power. They are many, strong, and determined. Nothing is too bad for them. I regret it; my heart breaks at the thought. We expected so much from you. And now your work must end."

"Not end but begin."

"How begin?"

"Reforms do not end with the men who started them."

"You do not know your enemies. They will not stop until they have destroyed forever your power to continue your good work."

"You mean that they may kill me?"

"Exactly so."

"And make certain the reform that some of us desire. You remember Wuh Yuen, the great reformer? Not until his death did his efforts meet with success."

"And do you mean to die for your cause?"

"No; but live to see it succeed."

"I fear not. I fear not. You know not the men. They will not only bring but *prove* charges against you. What will you do?"

"Deny, and prove them false."

"How can you? You know that witnesses are ready to testify anything against those whom they hate. Should witnesses testify that you have served

foreigners rather than your country, what testimony can you bring to refute? You know that friends of foreigners find little mercy. You know what must follow if you are convicted as a spy in the service of foreigners."

"There is no possibility of such a result," replied Thean indignantly.

"You know that foes make possibilities. Enemies of foreigners stop at nothing to accomplish their purposes. You know that multitudes are determined to drive the hated foreigner forever from our land. To prove or even declare that one of our own number is a spy in their service, is to doom him to death. Some suspect you as a spy."

This was more than the old man meant to say. The words came unexpectedly even to himself. In the conversation, partly repeated, he tried to appear as Thean's friend. But something in the eye of the young man led him to suppose that his real character was suspected.

"Everything smooth is slimy to the serpent," replied Thean injudiciously.

"You are right. Your enemies are the real spies," responded the old man, determined to hide his own character. "Call them what you will, they are bad and desperate. Their deeds have been exposed, and they mean to have revenge. More than that, they

mean to prevent another exposure. If they fail in one effort, they will try another. Your friends are powerless to help you. This trial can end only one way. You know what that is. You have no witnesses to prove you innocent of the charges to be pressed against you. Their testimony will be overwhelming. You know what must follow."

"I do not."

"Would you have me warn you?"

"If you will."

"You cannot escape condemnation. You know the punishment. That means not simply death and disgrace to your name, but eternal shame to your relatives."

"What do you advise me to do to escape?" asked the young man, showing more anxiety than he really felt.

"Were it possible, the emperor might send you the silken cord. But your foes will not allow the opportunity. They mean to prevent any other following your example."

"You mean that I must swallow gold leaf?"

"Exactly. It will be a worthy imitation of noble men who gained eternal honor, and promoted the cause in death that in life they could not make successful."

"That is, you propose that I confess myself guilty

by taking my own life? You propose that I sneak out of a trial like a coward?"

"My most noble and worthy friend, you misunderstand my purpose entirely. You are fearless and faithful. No one doubts that. Your friends never for a moment doubted your innocence. They will be more convinced than ever that you are true to your desire for reform if you compel it by sacrificing your life, as has been suggested. That will turn all eyes to the cause we so love. But, if you are punished as a guilty criminal, a spy, you make the cause despised, its friends hated, its advocates powerless."

"You would make me a victim? Let me say in reply that I am not ready for sacrifice yet. Service suits me better, and will promote the cause more."

"Did it ever occur to you that, by sacrificing your life thus, you will not only identify the cause with that sacrifice, but you will be able to revenge yourself on your foes?"

"How?"

"In the spirit world you will be able to do what you cannot here. The spirit separated from the body is mighty. You can afflict your foes with all the torments of the dead."

"I am a sewtsai, you a chinsu; we understand each other. You know that this talk about the power of spirits is nonsense. If so mighty, why are they

dependent on human beings for food, drink, garments, and home? If you do believe those follies, let me say that I do not. I do not intend to die by my own hand, nor by the hand of any other, if possible to prevent. If the cause needs a victim, he may be offered later. It needs an advocate now. Dead men are powerless, living ones mighty. I shall remain one of the latter as long as possible. And as for condemnation, I know who are for me, as well as you know who are against me. All the power is not on one side. I have not undertaken to expose wrong-doing on my own responsibility. The Middle Kingdom may have many mandarins who dare not stand by those who have done their duty, but it has at least a few faithful ones."

Unable to influence Thean, the old man left. Nor was the young officer sure what had really been the object of this visit. If to learn the purpose of the young mandarin, then the visit was not in vain. If to really persuade him to commit suicide that the uncertainties of a trial might be avoided, then the errand was useless.

An officer whom Thean trusted called soon after the old mandarin left, and advised the young man. Said the newcomer: —

“ We have tried in vain to prevent the trial. It was thought possible to turn away the foes by giving your

duties to another. But they are too intent on punishing you. Perhaps, were you to resign and retire to private life for a while, that would have effect."

"Resignation would seem cowardice now."

"Yet would save trouble for you, as well as for your friends."

"Perhaps. I doubt, however, if the charges would be withdrawn. Indeed, they are too serious. Duty to my country, no less than duty to myself, demands that I be tried now. I dread a trial, but fear more to remain under suspicion. Though I resign and escape trial, that does not remove suspicion. Conscious of innocence, I wish to prove it."

"Yet you have no evidence to present that will convince others of your innocence. You know that your friends trust you and are convinced of your uprightness. You know that they will stand by you. But they lack numbers, and lack testimony. The fact is that we have pressed the dishonest ones so far that they are determined to remove danger in the future by getting rid of you. We will save your life, but dare not do more, lest we bring on ourselves the fury of foes to foreigners. It may seem hard to you that we allow you to suffer, yet we cannot prevent. Our purpose is to lessen your suffering and prevent further difficulty at present to others."

"I know full well that those who directed me will

not desert me in trouble. Yet they must allow me to stand firm, even though I suffer for it. An officer of the government must suffer as well as serve. There is such a thing as duty to others; and when it conflicts with our own comfort we must sacrifice self."

"That sounds well, yet is it wise? Even your best friends advise you to escape when they see danger threatening. They think more of you than of the country, and you more of the Middle Kingdom and what you call duty than of your own interests. Where did you learn to act thus?"

"It matters little about the source of the stream if the water be pure and invigorating. The Middle Kingdom is a worthy nation, and deserves the best its officers can give. Though others withhold their best, that is no reason why I should."

"Have you learned from foreigners?"

"I have learned from heaven."

"How can heaven teach? In what language does it proclaim its lessons?"

"The heart needs no voice nor ear nor tongue. The infant trusts its mother's love before it understands her words."

"Beware that heaven do not allow you to suffer."

"It may allow that good result. Trouble and suffering are not always evil. Good may follow."

Finding that he could not move Thean from his

purpose, the officer, after assurances of sympathy and confidence, left.

The trial was not delayed. In it Thean seemed alone. He understood why his most influential friends had so little to say; but they were not idle. They advised in private and told what they were doing. When the accused asked if he might summon foreigners and missionaries to testify in his favor, he was told that such testimony would not change the result, and the presence of foreigners would prejudice his case.

“No,” said a prominent officer, “have no foreigner present. Deny that you had anything to do with them, and compel your foes to testify to time, place, circumstance when they associate you with foreigners, and we will provide you with witnesses to declare that you were at other places engaged in entirely different duties at the time.”

“Whether it be true or false?”

“What does that matter? The testimony against you will be false.”

“But I do not trust in falsehood.”

“Do you choose your club when attacked by a dog?”

“No; but I assure myself that it is a club, not a bush with thorns to pierce my hands.”

Witnesses testified against Thean and declared him a spy; giving time, place, and details of service in

foreign employ. They swore that he had accepted bribes; they gave full answers to all questions, and seemed to have a complete case against the accused.

When his turn came, Thean produced a record of his duties, places where he was, and what he had done on the days in which he was said to have been engaged in criminal acts. The official records and officers who were questioned in his favor showed that he told the truth.

In their eagerness to condemn, his foes had not been cautious. Nor did they expect to find such influence, though quiet and even secret, in favor of the young officer. They saw that he was likely to be acquitted, for it became evident that men had sworn falsely and according to a conspiracy. As the trial approached the end a request was made that it be postponed until further testimony of facts, just come to light, might be obtained. The request was granted.

When renewed, witnesses testified that Thean had been seen again and again in the company of a missionary in Amoy, and that he had made a distinct agreement with one of the missionaries of the Protestant village, by which he should receive special reward for his services. The dates again were given.

The young man was ill at ease when this testimony was presented. Even his friends saw that he had

kept back much from them if the witnesses told any truth.

When he tried to explain, for he could not deny the visits to the home of the Amoy missionary, he was forced to admit that he went to learn about the foreign religion. He could explain more easily what had been testified regarding his visit and conversation with the missionary in the north. But, since he admitted that he had sought to know more about the foreign religion, all other explanations had little effect. It was useless to deny that anything had been said about service for foreigners and reward for what he had done.

The reader may remember the Protestant missionary in the north told Thean that his services would be rewarded by a mightier Monarch than ruled the Middle Kingdom. This had been overheard and reported to the young man's enemies, and was brought as testimony that he was a spy in the services of another than the Middle Kingdom, and that he had accepted bribes. Thean's explanation that the Ruler of all nations, dwelling in heaven, was meant, was not accepted. It was enough that he admitted truth in the testimony.

The young mandarin was pronounced guilty. Even his friends turned against him now. He had confessed his intimacy with missionaries and interest in

their religion ; and those who before were faithful to the accused regarded him with indifference now. Yet the promise made was kept. Sentence of death was not pronounced. Instead, it was said because of Thean's former faithfulness, mercy was shown. But he was condemned and sentenced. That sentence appears in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DEGRADED.

THE trial ended suddenly. Its result was unexpected to Thean's friends, and overwhelming to him. When the sentence was pronounced the young man stood speechless.

Convicted as a spy in the service of foreigners; guilty of accepting bribes! He could not comprehend the meaning. The outcome of the first part of the trial seemed so favorable that he had not expected anything else than an acquittal. Nothing but mercy prevented the death sentence.

The sentence was degradation from office without hope of restoration. He must never expect to be a mandarin again. He was degraded and disgraced for life.

While the young man stood speechless and only half conscious of the fearful meaning of his degradation, an under officer approached and cut the official braid from his coat, and took from his hat the button of the mandarin. The ends of threads showed what had been done, and proclaimed to all who saw him that he had been publicly disgraced.

Thean watched the removal of the signs of office,

listened to the approval of the observers, but was silent. He did not move. He seemed paralyzed, yet his mind was busy. He thought of the meaning of all this, and the future it would bring. He was nothing more than a common coolie. Indeed he would receive less respect, less attention. He was almost an outlaw. Mercy alone kept him from suffering for the greatest of crimes. Could he expect favor, kindness, even ordinary courtesy? Could he expect the protection given to the common laborer?

A thought came to his mind. Though no longer a mandarin, he was yet a sewtsai. He had rights, privileges, honors. While the button of the graduate remained his own he need not fear violence, nor even the contempt of the crowd. The button would command respect, the position would prevent further disgrace, unless — and the mind went on. The graduate's degree might be taken from him too.

While the murmurs of satisfaction continued, a man stepped up to Thean and, touching his arm, said gently: —

“Follow me. Leave at once.”

Recognizing a servant of his best friend, a prominent mandarin, Thean followed. Though he heard the voices of many speaking against him, the young man knew that he was safe under the care of the servant of that mandarin.

“Enter this sedan chair and remain quiet. I will close and lock the door. The bearers will hurry you homeward. Do not stop, neither ask nor answer questions. You are to act as if dumb. And, hurried away before the people have time to harm or follow, you will soon be out of danger. Reach Amoy as soon as possible and remain secluded for a while. Some day your friend, my master, will visit or send for you. Your clothing and other property will follow, and your servant whom you can trust will be near to attend to all your wants.”

Thean reached home safely and surprised his relatives by his coming. The reason was given and the whole story of his interest in Christianity told. When he finished, his father asked:—

“Why need you admit that about the visits to the missionary?”

“I could not tell a falsehood.”

“Why not?”

“Because it is wrong to lie. It is contrary to the teaching of the Holy Book of foreigners.”

“And do you mean to tell the truth always, no matter what harm you suffer?”

“Always. It is my business to do right, God’s to take care of me.”

“Well, if this is a specimen of his care, then you would better go back to the gods of your own country.”

“Why need you accept a foreign God?” asked the father later. “Giving up those of the Middle Kingdom was well enough; they are useless, and cost more than they give. But this God seems to cost far more. I have no use for gods. They are too costly.”

“Every good costs at first. But this brings joys that I never knew before.”

“What joys?”

“Of heart. I never knew what it was to be happy and to have perfect peace.”

“Happy? Perfect peace? Do you mean to say that degradation and disgrace bring happiness?”

“In spite of degradation, not disgrace, I have peace. I did right and what was my duty. I would rather have what fills my heart to-day than the highest office in the empire with my ‘hungry heart.’ That is satisfied.”

“I cannot understand, nor does it matter. Now that you are no longer a mandarin, you may become a business man and help me. That is what I wanted from the first.”

“But I am yet a sewtsai, and may continue to study and become a kugin.”

“What will be the good of that? You can never hold office, you say.”

“True; that is the sentence, but there may come opportunity. When they learn that I was faithful to

my country, they may allow me to return to its service. I do not care for office for its own sake, but for the sake of the Middle Kingdom. Some mandarins in power will ruin our nation unless prevented."

"What can you do to hinder? Mandarins only care for the money they can make. It will not matter who is in power. Every ruler, all officers are about the same. Each cares for himself."

"Not each one. Some of our chief officers are as true and faithful as any government can wish. But they are too few in number to control. The men in power, especially in the north, are bitter foes to foreigners, and mean to involve this country in a foreign war. They think that will bring some change and give them an opportunity to gain more power. Some think of themselves alone, others of overthrowing the present government and establishing another. The few faithful ones wish to prevent all war, and seek only the best interests of the whole country."

"Let them fight it out, while you share my business with me. You will make more money and have far less trouble, and can remain at home."

"Will you object to my visiting the missionary and attending worship in the chapel?"

"What, worship the God of foreigners?"

"If you permit."

"As long as it brings you into no other trouble, I

do not care, if you help me in business. If you find pleasure in that, it matters not to me that you go. But you will find other friends opposing. What would your grandmother say? Who will care for her spirit?"

"Father, my grandmother worshiped and loved the God of foreigners too."

"What!"

"Grandmother gave herself to the foreign God before she died."

"What!"

"Grandmother became a disciple of the Jesus worshiped in foreign lands."

"Your grandmother? My honored mother?"

"My grandmother, the honored mother of my respected father."

"Did not you say a few minutes ago that you will not tell untruths?"

"I tell the truth. Do you remember her joy before she left us?"

"Yes; and have often wondered what caused it."

"Do you remember what she said?"

"Some things."

"She feared to say much in the presence of others except myself."

"She need not have feared. Had she told me that she had discovered a better than the gods she wor-

shiped so faithfully all her life, I would have believed him a very excellent God indeed."

"And he is. He is the only true and almighty God."

"We will talk more about him another day."

"But, father, if you permit, I wish to say more now. You need this God. He wants you to become his friend, follower, and disciple. You are a sinner and need a Saviour. He is the only one able to save you. I wish you would listen."

"Not now, my son; some other time."

Thean's official friend called on him two months later, and expressed his sorrow at losing the young man's services.

"I may return to office. I mean to study, become a kugin, and then chinsu. What can hinder my returning to office if I reach the third degree?"

"Nothing. But beware that your first degree be not taken away. Remember that hatred to foreigners is great, and growing in intensity. Have as little as possible to do with them, and nothing with their religion, lest it come to the ears of your foes. They will surely take away your degree."

"What has my degree to do with my worship?"

"It should have nothing to do with it. But foreign worship means intimacy with foreigners. Beware that you keep away from them, and in time you may return to office. We need and wish to have you, but it is use-

less to try to get you back if you have anything to do with the foreign religion."

"Do you hate that too?"

"Hate? Why should I? It produces good men, a strong government and mighty nations."

"But our people hate foreigners, and most of all their religion."

"Their hatred is blind, mad. If they knew more, they would respect. But I must not speak thus, lest you think me a worshiper of the foreigners' God. I am not ready to offer myself a victim to the blind rage of my people."

"Why be ashamed of Him, if you know his excellency?"

"Because a thing is good, must I therefore sacrifice myself to it? No, indeed. I prefer saying less and living longer. Yet, if a friend in whom I can confide asks, I am ready to tell him the truth. Some day this hatred to foreigners will pass away. Our people do not understand them, and priests and learned men promote this misunderstanding by false statements. Foreigners are not our enemies; except as they are prompted by selfishness. They want no war; it costs too much and hinders gain. What they wish is trade and money. Let them make money by trading with us, and instead of warfare they will insist on peace."

“I agree with you and wish other officers understood them as well as you do. Have you ever read the sacred book of foreigners?”

“Why do you ask?”

“I have, and wish your opinion, if you have read it.”

“You read it? Yes, I read it too. It is a remarkable book. I never saw another like it. Followed faithfully, it would revolutionize every nation of earth. It would stop war, leave men-of-war to rot, and disband every army, and change all weapons into tools. Prisons and punishment would cease, and men would become brothers, each as anxious to serve his fellow as to gain good for himself.”

“I am surprised to hear you speak thus, and no less pleased. Since you believe, why not proclaim what the book teaches?”

“And receive the silken cord for my pains? No; I am as willing as any man to stand by what is for the good of my nation, but when such courage brings only ill results to me, no good to others, I prefer silence.”

A company of sewtsais called on Thean and seemed very anxious for his welfare. Never were his fellows more polite, never more respectful. Yet their conversation was suggestive. Occasionally their questions showed a secret purpose, but that purpose was

not accomplished in the call. Thean was on his guard, and politely but shrewdly evaded the questions. Those related to missionaries, foreign chapels, and religion, but as each was asked seemingly without connecting Thean with either, he had less difficulty in escaping. As the men left, they said that they would expect to meet Thean at the gathering of sewtsais, and be glad to hear more from him regarding foreigners and their ways.

Thean understood this hint and prepared for it. They meant to tell him that, since he had given no satisfaction about his visits to chapels, missionaries, and Christian teachers, he must prepare to answer direct questions at the gathering of sewtsais.

At that meeting, after a great deal of politeness and ceremony but decided tendency toward directness, he was asked to explain rumors about his interest in foreigners and their faith. It was difficult to evade the questions at first, impossible later; nor did the young man intend to hold back anything that his fellows had a right to know. He had consulted his friend the missionary, and had made the matter a subject of earnest prayer, and decided fully on his course. After replying to a number of questions, each more direct than that which preceded, he arose to make a formal address and began by saying, after many polite phrases: —

“ I know what is expected of me, and what is my duty. If I have not been fearless and frank in this, it has been because I was in doubt about duty. I knew that my country needed me; yet you would object to what I accepted as duty in another direction. This may have been wrong on my part. If so, pardon me. It seemed my imperative duty to be faithful to official responsibilities until those were discharged. When relieved of those, another duty arose, and to that I have faithfully given time, thought, everything, until another even more serious question was settled. That is now fully decided, and I am ready to make a full explanation of my course, and then submit myself to your judgment. Nor am I in doubt what that will be.

“ When north aiding the famine sufferers, I was brought in close official intimacy with foreigners and teachers of their religion. I saw that foreigners gave all contributions to the sufferers, while our own people, and they officers of the government, the chief ones, men of learning as we are, gave less than half. That is, foreigners without division gave the whole to the needy; we divided and gave our own dying ones less than half sent to save their lives. When I sought the reason for this great difference, I learned that foreigners serve a merciful, loving God whom they call Jesus; and in obedience to his command they care thus for

strangers. I then bought a book telling about Jesus. Reading that, my mind was led to contrast his teachings with those of our sages, and they are alike, only Jesus is even more exalted, his teachings more noble. It became evident to me that we have drifted away from the instructions of our most worthy teachers of the past, and that if we learned men could get back, we would bring prosperity, peace, and mighty power back to the Middle Kingdom. To prove that, I tried, as an officer, to act in accord with the teachings of Jesus. Though at first it aroused opposition on the part of those who were guilty of disobedience to the teachings of the men of wisdom, in the end far more sufferers were relieved and great trouble was averted. I saw that those teachings were wise and true. I now assert that, if the Middle Kingdom returns to the most worthy doctrines of its sages and then adds to them the even higher, nobler ones of this great Teacher and God, Jesus, such a career of peace, prosperity, and happiness as our country has never seen will open before the Middle Kingdom.

“ Unless there come a change, our nation will grow weaker and poorer, while others fatten and enrich themselves on our poverty. By our individual selfishness we are destroying not only our nation but the very opportunity to gratify our love for wealth. We are thus our worst foes. You all know that the

greed of mandarins is robbing the people, destroying their confidence in the government, and preparing them for revolt. So, if foreigners do not cause greater trouble, our own people will. They may suffer for yet a few years, but the occasion will come, and a revolt will result. What its end will be I cannot foresee. Because those higher in authority than myself sought to bring about a change, I was the more eager to serve them, believing that our country can be saved. But its salvation must come through nobler principles than now prevail among its rulers. Those principles have been indicated.

“ In my study of the book that reveals the doctrines and life of Jesus, I was surprised to discover myself a sinner. Though supposing myself pure, good, noble, I saw, to my amazement, that he has a very much higher standard, and that mine is base, low, selfish. I need not dwell on my personal experience and feelings ; it is enough that I am conscious of sinfulness and guilt ; but this Jesus is a Saviour. Burdened with sin, I sought his pardon and found it. My heart, so heavy and sad at the discovery, is now light and happy since the better discovery was made, for I have given myself to him, to serve or suffer for him, it matters little which. I have told you the whole story in as few words as possible, yet am ready to answer any question.”

Thean then sat down, and for a few moments there was silence. During his address there had been indications of displeasure, and twice men arose as if to dispute and oppose the speaker, but they were quieted by the leader. After brief silence the leader asked :

“Have you determined to forsake the religion of your ancestors?”

“On the contrary, I mean to return to that of the earliest fathers. It is my purpose to go back to the one God worshiped ages ago — the great Siong Te — by our ancestors.”

“He was one of many, though among the chief gods,” responded a learned sewtsai quickly.

“Those coming after our first fathers unwisely added gods, and gradually raised them up to hide the one mighty Being. Thus many gods were held before the people instead of one Supreme,” replied Thean.

“How do you know?” asked a man.

“In the ancient books of our country I have gleaned the precious truth that originally the Middle Kingdom worshiped one God,” was the answer. “When our most gracious emperor worships in the Temple of Heaven he worships no god of the Middle Kingdom, but at the throne of this great Being whom our priests and others have suffered us to forget. I would bring the whole nation back to this great God, and ask our most worthy emperor to lead us back, not to the home,

but to the throne and feet of Him whom our ancestors loved and served ages ago. Those were the ages of glory and peace to which sages refer."

Thean's replies confounded the company and seemed unanswerable. They knew little, but that little led them to believe the young man right. Yet deep in their hearts was intense hatred to him and his ways. They knew that he favored foreigners and Christianity. No argument he might advance would destroy that, nor lessen their bitterness to the men whom they believed to be foes to their country; at least their methods and customs. Evidently he had read in ancient writers what they had not, yet had heard existed. They cared not about religion, nor did they intend to be beguiled into letting Thean escape. Said one:—

"It may be wise that the young brother retire while we consult regarding his welfare."

Thean left and waited without until summoned again to the conference. Entering the room, he was requested to be seated, and then, after several polite remarks and complimentary allusions to him, his wisdom, service, and devotion to the Middle Kingdom, he was asked:—

"Have you determined to forsake the gods and customs of your ancestors?"

"As was answered before," he replied, "I mean to

return to God and the ancient customs with all my heart. I believe the present ones contrary to the best interests of the Middle Kingdom, and contrary to those of our early ancestors."

"Do you persist in keeping company with foreigners?"

"Only so far as business and common interests demand."

"Do you propose attending worship in their temples?"

"I have, as other sewtsais, long since neglected the temples of our country, and yet hold myself ready to worship wherever I find a God and worship that rests my heart."

"Have you found that anywhere?"

"I have."

"What god do you worship?"

"Siong Te, the God of our early ancestors."

"Do you worship Jesus, the God of foreigners?"

"He is the Son of the great Siong Te, and my Saviour."

"Then Siong Te is the God of foreigners?"

"Of all men, especially of our ancestors, since ours is the oldest living nation."

"But Jesus is a foreign God. Do you mean to forsake the gods of your country for him?"

"If the God of foreigners, it is because the Middle

Kingdom has turned from his Father, and thus from him."

"We wish a direct, definite answer to this question. Have you become a Christian?"

"I have."

"Then you have deserted your country's religion and gods for that of foreigners?"

"I have returned to the God whom ages ago my countrymen deserted."

"We are speaking of the present, not past, now. Have you determined to accept the God worshiped by foreigners as yours?"

"I have."

"You accept the doctrines taught by their teachers as yours?"

"I do."

"Then you admit that you have turned from your own to foreigners. Need we other testimony?"

This last inquiry was directed to the company of sewtsais. Their response was unanimous that there was no need to question further.

"Then shall the sentence be pronounced?" asked the leader. "You have already agreed, and I ask but once more. Do you, Lin Thean Kheh, turn from the gods now worshiped by your countrymen? Do you accept, instead, other and foreign gods? We give you yet one chance. We narrow it to one inquiry. Will

you have Jesus or our gods? Remember, this means a choice between all that is associated with the Middle Kingdom, and all associated with foreigners. Will you renounce Jesus?"

This was the crucial question and had been reserved for the final test. With an emphasis that startled his listeners, Thean, rising, said:—

"I will not! I will die for, but never deny him! He is my Saviour, my all! Never until I found him did my heart find peace. Shall I now, for a little honor, for a little power, a little wealth, all soon to be left behind, renounce forever him whom I have found the best, truest, dearest friend? Never! I am a Christian! As such I live, as such I die! Come what may, I stand by him who died for me. Do as you have decided, for words of mine will not avail to change your purpose; do as you have decided, for my decision has been given. You can but take from me what death a little later must demand; but you cannot take away the peace and joy my heart feels. If I only could share it with you all, I would gladly lay down my life; for I know that it would be sacrificed that you might gain the greatest blessing possible for man. You will take away my sewtsai honor, I know; you will send me back to the common people; you will try to heap on me shame and contempt: but you cannot take away this joy and rest that come like sunshine and sweetness to my life."

The men sought to stop Thean, but the leader beckoned them to silence. When Thean concluded and sat down, the chief said solemnly:—

“It is your own choice. We have given you every opportunity to turn back to wisdom, but since you refuse we cannot compel. We can but do our duty. That we must do. If we allow foreign influence to enter and gain a hold in our order, who can tell the result? It will mean ruin to us, destruction to the Middle Kingdom. If its learned men do not preserve its customs, who will? Therefore it is the unanimous decision of your fellow sewtsais that you be deposed from the order, yourself ignored by us, and you treated as a common workman. In due time the Literary Chancellor will remove your button and complete the work begun by us. We now declare you expelled from our society!”

At this announcement a common coolie entered, took Thean by the hand, and led him in silence from the room, as his former associates turned their faces from him.

A little later the young man was summoned before the Literary Chancellor, questioned, and then formally deprived of his official button, so reduced to the level of a common laborer; with this additional disgrace he was called a foe to his own country, a friend to foreigners, and unworthy of the confidence even of coolies.

As the young man passed out of the crowd and turned homeward, he expected scorn and derision, if not physical harm; instead, there was perfect silence. The people looked on and wondered; looked on and pitied; looked on and honored, yet could hardly tell why. They knew that Thean was now degraded to their own level, disgraced far below them in the eyes of mandarins and learned men; but they knew that another than the announced reason existed. The young man had started a reform, and now had become the victim of his own earnest effort for the good of his country and her suffering people. They had no sympathy with foreigners; they hated foreign religion and customs; but they hated mandarins more, and here was a member of the official and literary class who had dared to expose their corruption and selfishness. They dared not applaud him, nor would they if they could, since he had accepted the faith of foreigners; but they could not insult, could not treat unkindly a man who had sacrificed himself for their own and the country's good.

The degradation of Thean had a sad effect on those who had regarded him as champion of right and leader in reform. They saw that corruption was mighty and selfishness ruled; that officials would do their worst in opposing those who tried to bring them to justice.

"Well, what next will your new God take away?" asked Mr. Lin as his son returned home.

"Whatever he may allow others to take, he will not take away the peace that fills my heart," was the response.

"I would rather have less peace and more honor and power to gain riches," spoke the father. "But I can put you in the way of gaining wealth if you will enter my service."

"I am ready to serve you in any capacity, only I ask if you will allow me to rest one day in seven? I will do as much work in six days as others in seven, if you grant this request."

"You mean to give a day to worship as foreigners do, I suppose."

"That is my wish."

"I don't care, if you do as well as other worshipers of the foreign God. They really do more work in six days than others do in seven. So I have no objections, if you will only help me in my large business."

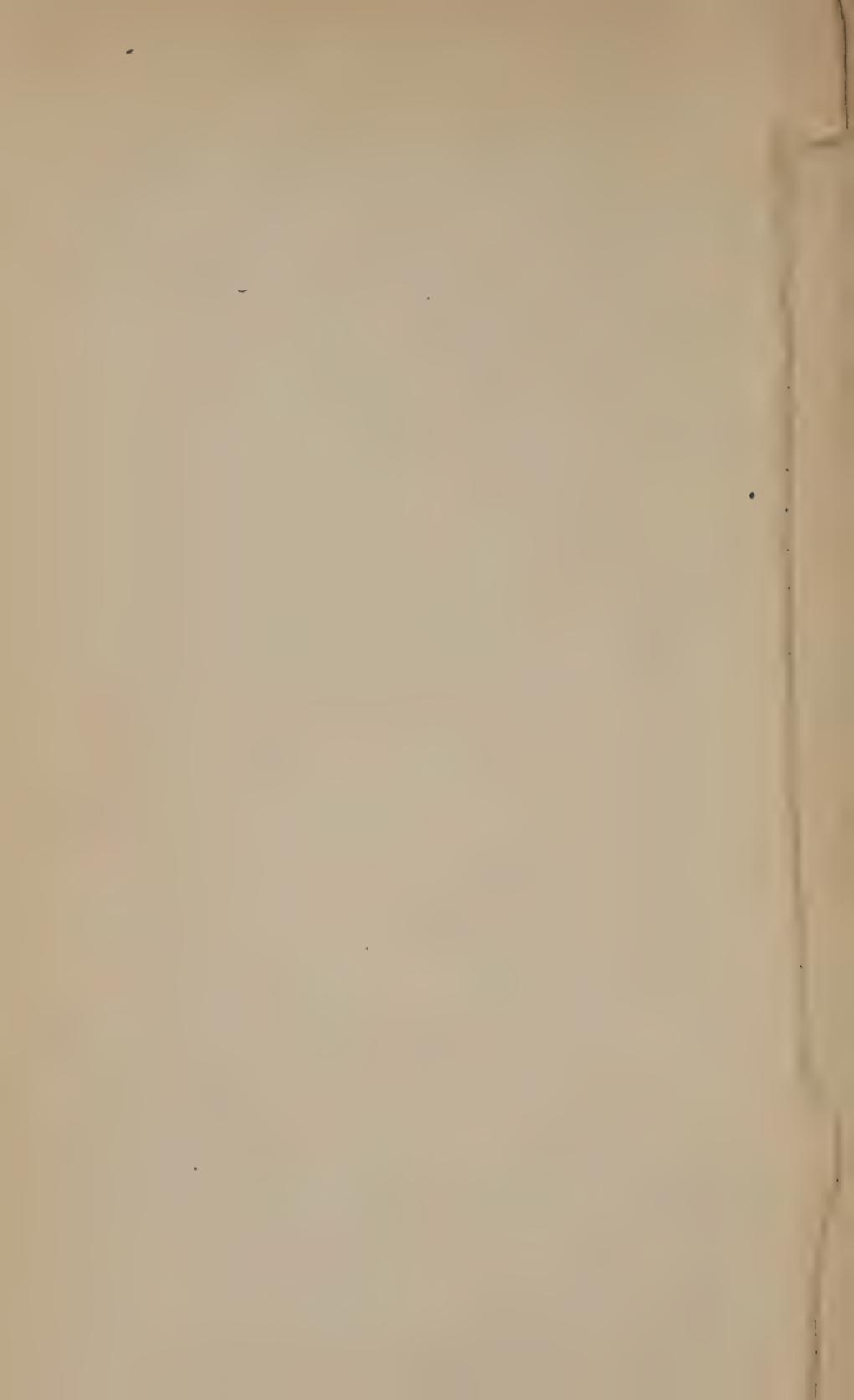
"How many feast days do you want a month?" asked Mr. Lin later.

"Not any. One day in seven is all I ask for rest, worship, everything."

"Then I doubt if I will be the loser. Some of my men seem to think that they must take twelve days at the beginning of the year, and four or five at each

monthly festival. I doubt if your religion costs more than theirs in time, whatever it may in money."

It is enough to add that Thean entered his father's service as a clerk, and soon after became a partner. Then the boatman's desire and hope of his life were gratified. Though more of Thean's history might be given, the author's purpose is merely to take him through his career as a mandarin. As a partner in the firm of passenger and freight boating of *Hok Gee Sun*, he is doing his duty as a citizen and Christian; and there we leave him to prove that Chinese are capable of doing and being what others do and are.



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